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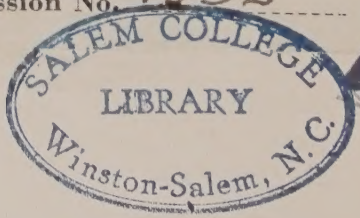

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FLAUBERT'S YOUTH

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FLAUBERT'S YOUTH
1821-1845

BY
LEWIS PIAGET SHANKS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES IN
THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
CHAPTER I.	BOYHOOD AND FIRST LOVE	1
CHAPTER II.	ADOLESCENCE	38
CHAPTER III.	THE ADOLESCENT PESSIMIST	68
CHAPTER IV.	FIRST TRAVELS	99
CHAPTER V.	*NOVEMBRE*	127
CHAPTER VI.	NERVOUS BREAKDOWN	159
CHAPTER VII.	FIRST *EDUCATION SENTIMENTALE*	186
CHAPTER VIII.	FLAUBERT AT TWENTY-THREE	214
	EPILOGUE	236

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The story of Flaubert's youth has a documentary no less than a personal interest: it mirrors the youth of a whole generation.

One could easily prove this by references from Mr. Louis Maigron's exhaustive study, *Le romantisme et les mœurs*. Here we can only quote an early poem of Baudelaire's, *Stances à Sainte-Beuve*, written in 1844 (*Œuvres posthumes*, 55-56):

Tous imberbes alors, sur les vieux bancs de chêne . . .
Nous traînions tristement nos ennuis, accroupis
Et voûtés sous le ciel carré des solitudes,
Où l'enfant boit, dix ans, l'âpre lait des études . . .
Qui de nous, en ces temps d'adolescences pâles,
N'a connu la torpeur des fatigues claustrales,
—L'œil perdu dans l'azur morne d'un ciel d'été,
Ou l'éblouissement de la neige,—guetté,
L'oreille avide et droite,—et bu, comme une meute,
L'écho lointain d'un livre, ou le cri d'une émeute?

C'était surtout l'été, quand les plombs se fondaient,
Que ces grands murs noircis en tristesse abondaient,
Lorsque la canicule ou le fumeux automne
Irradiait les cieux de son feu monotone . . .
Saison de rêverie, où la Muse s'accroche
Pendant un jour entier au battant d'une cloche;
Où la Mélancolie, à midi, quand tout dort,
Le menton dans la main, au fond du corridor . . .
Traîne un pied alourdi de précoces ennuis,
Et son front moite encor des langueurs de ses nuits.
—Et puis, venaient les soirs malsains, les nuits fiévreuses . . .
Les soirs italiens, de molle insouciance,
—Qui des plaisirs menteurs révèlent la science,
—Quand la sombre Vénus, du haut des balcons noirs,
Verse des flots de musc de ses frais encensoirs.—

Ce fut dans ce conflit de molles circonstances, . . .
Qu'un soir, ayant flairé le livre et son esprit,
J'emportai sur mon cœur l'histoire d'Amaury.
Tout abîme mystique est à deux pas du doute.—
Le breuvage infiltré lentement, goutte à goutte,
En moi qui, dès quinze ans, vers le gouffre entraîné,
Déchiffrais couramment les soupirs de René,
Et que de l'inconnu la soif bizarre altère,
—A travaillé le fond de la plus mince artère.
J'en ai tout absorbé, les miasmes, les parfums . . .

Et depuis . . .
Soit dans les lourds loisirs d'un jour caniculaire,
Ou dans l'oisiveté frileuse de frimaire . . .
. . . devant le miroir, j'ai perfectionné
L'art cruel qu'un démon, en naissant, m'a donné,
—De la douleur pour faire une volupté vraie,—
D'ensanglanter son mal et de gratter sa plaie.

This is Flaubert the schoolboy no less than Baudelaire, who was born the same year.

And it is essential for us to know Flaubert the schoolboy. "All those who have reflected upon their lives, who have often turned back their gaze in order to compare their past with their present life, all those who have learned the habit of ready self-analysis, know what an immense share in a man's definitive genius is due to his adolescence. It is then that things stamp themselves deeply upon the tender and responsive mind; it is then that colours are vivid, and the senses vocal with a mysterious tongue. The character, genius and style of a man are formed by the apparently vulgar circumstances of his first youth. If all the men who have come upon the world's stage had set down their impressions of their boyhood, what an excellent psychological dictionary we should have!" Thus Baudelaire again in his essay on Edgar Poe.

Flaubert has left us such a dictionary for the generation of his youth in France: it is contained in his letters, his juvenilia and his travel-notes. They are his confessions: he might have called them, as Baudelaire did his journal, *Mon cœur mis à nu*. To follow his mind through these five octavos is to recognize that mind in the masterpieces published after he had reached the age of thirty-five, and to read his mature novels in the light thus shed upon them is to see how constantly he went back to the sharply outlined memories and moods of his adolescence. For no sentimentalist escapes from his past, and Flaubert's past was the active life he renounced before he began *Madame Bovary*.

The importance of the subject should therefore excuse the prolixity of this study, undertaken in view of a popular biography now under way. To all Flaubert scholars the writer would hereby acknowledge his obligations. He owes a greater debt to Professor Chinard and to his other colleagues at the Johns Hopkins University, and to the spirit of research which he has found only in that institution.

L. P. S.

Johns Hopkins Club, Baltimore.

May 15, 1927.

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I

BOYHOOD AND FIRST LOVE

It is probably our human love of a conflict that makes us find ages of transition the most interesting of historical epochs, and that multiplies books on the Renaissance and the French Revolution. The case is certainly true for biography: no placid genius can fascinate our attention like the author caught between the currents of a changing *Zeitgeist* and forced by the accident of his birth to serve a new spirit or a double ideal. There are writers who exemplify the spiritual struggles of a generation.

Gustave Flaubert fought such a battle. Although born twenty years after Balzac, Hugo and George Sand, he was a type so naturally Romantic that he had already begun to plan tragedies in the year that *Hernani* was first performed. At ten he was both an author and an actor, with his father's old billiard table for a stage; and five years later he slept with a poniard under his pillow (Goncourt, *Journal,* I, 309), scribbled gory mediæval tales and boyishly ranted of suicide. His precocity as an author branded him with all the follies of a dying school; and isolated as he was in a provincial city, he did not know Romanticism was dying until he went to Paris in his twentieth year. Yet this schoolboy Faust or Manfred lived to found French Realism at thirty-five with *Madame Bovary.*

We can only explain this apparent miracle by a chronological study based upon all the available data. Our way lies through a morass of youthful rhetoric, but it has an interest no less historical than human. For Flaubert typifies Romanticism; nay more, coming late into the movement and lacking, as did Baudelaire, the humour that tempers the lyricism of Musset and Gautier, he exhibits the Romantic malady in its wildest paroxysm.

We are justified in seeking the aid of any theory to help explain that violence of temperament. But we need not accept the strain of Indian blood that Flaubert claimed (Goncourt, *ibid.*, II, 8) when he asserted that one of his ancestors had married a woman of Canada. His verified family tree provides a physical basis for the man's exuberance, ambition and vitality.

His father came from a family long established in Champagne. Born at Maizières-la-Grande-Paroisse (Aude) in 1784, Achille-Cléophas Flaubert was the son of a veterinary surgeon, who was in his turn the son and grandson of country blacksmiths (*Revue historique de la Révolution française*, 1923). Achille Flaubert finished brilliantly his studies at the Collège de Sens; then the veterinary of Nogent-sur-Seine eked out the money to send him to the medical school at Paris. There the boy showed such promise that the First Consul defrayed his expenses; but the jealousy of his teacher Dupuytren was fired, and after the

young interne lost his health from overwork, he was relegated to a provincial hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu of Rouen.

When he became chief-surgeon here Achille Flaubert was thirty-four—a laborious and methodical practitioner, with an ardour for study and dissection only matched by his devotion to his patients. His son depicted him as Dr. Larivière in *Madame Bovary* (441-442). "Disdainful of titles, decorations and scientific societies, hospitable, broad-minded, fatherly with the poor and practising virtue without believing in it, he would almost have been considered a saint if the sharpness of his mind had not made him feared as a demon." There are many traits belonging to the son in this portrait, especially the remark that "everyone trembled in his hospital when he became angry." And we do not forget that if Dr. Flaubert had the patience of a peasant ancestry and the philosophy of a Voltairian, he was after all talented and unrewarded, and in his family must have voiced the disillusioned cynicism that so early oppressed his son (Cf. Thibaudet, *Gustave Flaubert*, 2).

Accident and devotion to his work were not, however, all that kept Dr. Flaubert—who planned a book that might have brought him a call to Paris—in the humbler faculty and hospital of Rouen. While still a demonstrator of anatomy there, he had married the god-daughter of his chief Laumonier—a girl nine years younger than he, and descended through her mother from one of the oldest noble families of Normandy,

a family of soldiers and adventurers whose scions appear among the Norman invaders of Sicily. And this bride, Anne-Justine-Caroline Fleuriot, sprang from a mating that would have pleased the socialistic muse of George Sand. The gossip caused by "the disproportionate marriage" of Flaubert's grandmother, Charlotte Cambremer de Croixmare and Jean-Baptiste-François-Prosper Fleuriot, "a physician with no reputation," is noted by Charlotte Corday in one of her letters (*Souvenirs intimes* par Mme. Commanville, preceding Flaubert's *Correspondance,* v. I. p. xi, Conard edition).

But Flaubert's maternal grandfather was brave enough to take his bride from the convent where her parents had placed her; he was tender-hearted and devoted, for when the noblewoman died after giving birth to a daughter, he cared for her with a mother's care. When shortly after he, too, died, this daughter was brought up at Honfleur by two former ladies of the convent of Saint-Cyr. In her early teens she was sent to the home of her god-father, Laumonier, at Rouen, where she plighted her faith to Achille Flaubert. After the young doctor had successfully defended his thesis (1810), they married, February 10, 1812; and five years later Achille Flaubert succeeded Laumonier as chief of the Hôtel-Dieu and moved his family into the hospital apartment left vacant by his predecessor's death.

Madame Flaubert gave to her son more than her sensitiveness, her Norman imagination and her ten-

dency to neurasthenia. She had the simplicity of the pre-Revolutionary patrician (*Correspondance,* Conard edition, I, 255), the intellectual breadth of the eighteenth century, and, above all, an intensely aristocratic pride, which reappears in her son's disdain for bourgeois ideals of morality or material success. "She isn't flattered by anything," he wrote to his mistress, Louise Colet (*Corr.* II, 110), who wished to visit the old lady at Croisset, "she has in her character something imperturbable, curt and glacial that disconcerts you. She feels no necessity for moments of expansion, and still less need of principles. Made up entirely of virtues, she impudently declares that she does not even know what virtue is, and that she has never made to it a single sacrifice."

Here is the same stoic virtue that Flaubert will invoke in his devotion to Art. But in his mother, of course, this cynicism is only a mask, *de rigueur* in a generation of the disciples of Voltaire. Beneath it she hid an absolute devotion to her family. When her daughter died in childbirth, she resumed at fifty all the burdens of motherhood: she brought up her granddaughter, and she made a home for her cloistered son until she died. Without her the affectionate but irritable bachelor might have found neither the calm nor the relief from material worries that his nerves required: his mother's self-sacrifice and his father's fortune made his career possible, and kept him young until the war of 1870.

Such were Flaubert's parents. In the veins of their

two sons the blood of tenacious artisans, surgeons and red-blooded adventurers was variously mingled. The first son really got the double Hippocratic stamp, since he succeeded his father as chief of the hospital. Dr. René Dumesnil finds a similar medical heredity in the genius born nine years later (*Flaubert, son hérédité, son milieu, sa méthode*). It is true that the novelist resembles his father in his taste for analysis and classification: he amassed notes like a scholar and filed carefully every letter he received. But despite these traits, Gustave Flaubert hardly seems the typical descendant of a physician and a veterinary surgeon. Hence, we may be excused for tracing back his heredity, which he himself overstresses like all the generation of Taine. We find the proud, lusty and adventurous Norman in his letters and early works, but only the obstinate patience of Champenois blacksmiths could have chained this flaming spirit to a desk for fifteen hours a day, and by a twenty-year apprenticeship forged a Realist from a character essentially lyrical.

Norman blood predominated, physically at least, in the blond, blue-eyed boy who first saw the light in the old hospital, December 12, 1821. Before his birth two children had died in infancy (*Souvenirs intimes,* v). Fate thus predestined Gustave to the rôle of a spoiled child, for egotism is not curbed by the slight commerce permitted between sons separated by a span of nine years. He was spoiled by his nurse, Julie, a well-read peasant

woman, who stuffed his eager mind with legends of her village and stories from sentimental novels. He had the prerogatives of beauty: as a baby he had been kissed by the Duchesse de Berry, who stopped her carriage to admire him (*Corr.*, I, 258); thus, even at eight he was not forced to study, and only acquired the key to books from the example of his sister, Caroline, three years younger than he. "What's the use of learning to read," he would say, "when 'Uncle' Mignot reads to me?" 'Uncle' Mignot, great-uncle of his first friend, Ernest Chevalier, regaled him with the deeds of Don Quixote, so that he "knew the book by heart before he learned to read (*Corr.*, II, 147)." When Gustave was "lost," he could always be found at the little house close by in the Rue Lecat. Flaubert never tired of *Don Quixote,* whose irony so impressed him that in 1852 he could "find all his origins" in the volume (*Corr.*, II, 147; Cf. also I, 295; II, 6; 174).

He also admitted the macabre imprint of the hospital in which he grew up (*Corr.*, II, 6). It stands today almost unchanged (Maynial, *La jeunesse de Flaubert,* p. 23), with its tall two-storey façade, topped by a semi-circular pediment and a low bell-tower, opposite the great doorway of the cathedral of Rouen. Two lateral wings enclose the main court planted with lindens; the left wing was the abode of the surgeon-in-chief. The room where Gustave passed his childhood faced the court where the convalescents were allowed to walk or sit. In the damp, little garden behind the pavilion the child played and dreamed; his boyhood

was spent in the hushed precincts of the hospital, among white-capped sisters of charity and white-faced patients, in an atmosphere of suffering and silence and self-repression.

Was he a boy who would naturally react to such an environment? The *Souvenirs intimes* tell us that as a child he would sit for hours, with finger in mouth, rapt in reverie.[1] Even at six his candour was such that he quietly obeyed the servant who sent him away by repeating the old French saw: "Go see if I'm down in the garden." These are details that Mme. Commanville, who was Flaubert's niece, heard from her grandmother's lips. One of the novelist's own memories may be added, to complete our portrait of the dreamy, contemplative child. When he learned to read, he would walk about the apartment, so absorbed in his book that he often fell, once hurting himself severely (Goncourt, II, 80). Such was the seed-bed into which dropped the fantasies of folk-lore, the vagaries of sentimental novels read by Julie, the mad or grotesque deeds of Don Quixote, and which was now to open its virgin soil to the terrific novels and melodramas of the eighteen-thirties.

Nor did these seeds long remain dormant in his imagination. Flaubert was only nine when he wrote this misspelled letter to little Ernest Chevalier, on the

[1] Flaubert wondered at this, later (*Corr.*, II, 399): "Why did I, when still a child, use to shut myself up alone for hours in a room?"

last day of that *annus mirabilis* of French Romanticism, the year of *Hernani* and the Revolution which brought the bourgeois into power:

"Dear Friend: You are right in saying that New Year's Day is stupid. . . . My Friend, I'll send you some of my Liberal-constitutional political speeches. . . . I'll also send you some of my comedies. If you wish to form a partnership in writing, I'll write comedies and you shall write your dreams, and as there is a lady who comes to Dad's office and who is always saying silly things, I'll write them down, too. . . . (*Corr.*, I, 1; Dec. 31, 1830)."

Flaubert's letters thus show at nine the same absorption in literature that he will manifest at fifty: we must agree with his niece that the man of genius is traceable in the earliest published letter of the boy. Some critics have gone further, and found in the first and last sentences quoted above the satiric realist that he was destined to become (Thibaudet, *Gustave Flaubert,* 6; Descharmes, 83). But a subsequent letter proves that, like any other French child, little Gustave loved the day that brought his holiday-gifts (*Corr.*, I, 90). Here he is plainly echoing his parents, bored by all the New Year's calls that the doctor's family was forced to make and receive (*Corr.*, V, 437).

It is evident, too, that Gustave is echoing his father in his own politics. But the juvenilia bear out his ambition to be a playwright. His parents unconsciously furthered this by taking him early to the theatre;

and the puppet-show of Saint Anthony enacted every year at the Foire Saint-Romain offered him later the epigraph if not the inspiration of the first version of *La tentation de saint Antoine:* "Messieurs les Démons, laissez-moi donc!"

The second published letter promises stories instead of plays, and the boy gives the titles of those he has in mind: *La belle Andalouse, Le bal masqué, Cardenio, Dorothée, La mauresque, Le curieux impertinent, Le mari prudent.* If actually written, none of these compositions on familiar themes from Cervantes, Musset and the Romanticists have survived. But Gustave tells Ernest that he has made his father's old billiard table into a stage, so as to enact a few *Proverbes dramatiques,* probably Marmontel's. At nine his barnstorming imagination has found expression.

Eleven months later we find the future Rabelaisian, too. Flaubert was not yet ten when he turned an essay on the genius of Corneille into a eulogy of constipation! This masterpiece is not included in the published juvenilia, but it so delighted Monsieur Mignot that he had it calligraphed at his own expense, probably on stone, and "printed," as the young author proudly announces (*Corr.,* Feb. 4, 1831; Jan. 15, 1832). Ernest's great-uncle gave Gustave the interest and encouragement he did not find at home: he made him take notes on *Don Quixote;* and the boy repaid his interest by finishing with Ernest a comedy, *L'amant avare,* which had seven scenes (A. Mignot, *Ernest Chevalier,* 2). Young Flaubert was to enter the Collège de Rouen the follow-

ing month (February, 1832), and he was reading in preparation for this event, since he announces that he is going to write "une histoire de Henri 4 de Louis 13 et de Louis 14."

By the end of March he had completed *L'antiquaire ignorant* (inspired by Scott's novel?); he had written a farcical account of the King's visit to Rouen, a poem called *Une mère,* and possibly some verses on the death of Louis XVI. Ernest was to come for a visit at Easter:

"Victory, victory, victory, victory," begins a letter dated April 3: "one of these days you'll come, my friend, the stage, the posters, everything is ready. . . . We'll give four plays that you don't know but you'll soon learn them, the first, second and third row tickets are done there will be orchestra stalls there is a roof and scenery. The curtain is set up perhaps there will be 10 to twelve people. Then you'll have to be brave and not get frightened. . . . I don't know whether you've seen *Poursognac* (*sic*), we'll give that together with a play by Berquin, one by Scribe and a dramatic proverb by Marmontel. . . . If you knew, when they told me you weren't coming I was frightfully angry. If by chance you shouldn't come I'd travel on my hands and knees to Andelys to get you . . . for a love you might call fraternal unites us . . . yes, I'd walk a thousand leagues if necessary to go and meet the best of friends, for nothing is so sweet as friendship.". . .

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These plays on the billiard table were to go on for years, with Gustave and Caroline Flaubert, Ernest Chevalier, Alfred and Laure Le Poittevin and other friends as co-actors and audience. Flaubert's letters now show an unremitting interest in the theatre. Visiting his uncle Parain in August, 1832, he writes that he has been to the play at Nogent-sur-Seine, and hopes that the stop at Paris on his return will yield a coveted evening at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin (the home of melodrama). A year later he is again at Nogent, visits Versailles and Fontainebleau and sees the table on which the hero of those days signed his abdication; then, stopping at Paris, he attends a performance of *La chambre ardente,* "a drama in which seven persons die," and which he proclaims "a fine play." Although isolated at Rouen and barely twelve years old, he is following at no long intervals the progress of Romanticism, for he adds that he has seen at Nangis the château of the marquis mentioned in Hugo's drama *Marion Delorme.*

His school record shows that he was less interested in prescribed study and not precocious save in writing. He did not shine in the classics, which then dominated the curriculum. Prizes fell to him only in history, which he studied with Chéruel, a pupil of Michelet and the sole teacher who fired his ambition. Although the boy was later to distinguish himself in philosophy, he had no mind for mathematics. But above all, says his niece, he hated the fixed hours, the drum-taps and the whole military discipline then in force in French

schools. As he was a boarding pupil, he knew all the check-reins of hall and dormitory and was infuriated by them. He was a born individualist, and when in 1833 Louis-Philippe visited Rouen, his liberalism thus explodes in a letter to Ernest:

"How silly men are, how narrow the herd. To vote 30,000 francs for the celebration . . . to stand in line at the theatre-door from three till half-past eight . . . for whom? for a king! Ah!!! . . . *I* didn't see anything, either the review or the king's arrival, or the princesses or the princes. I only went out last night to see the illumination, and that too because they provoked me." Even political convictions cannot keep a boy from fireworks!

The early letters are very rare, for they owe their existence only to the enforced separation of vacations. So we have no mention of Flaubert's first communion, which must have taken place at Easter, 1834, when he was twelve, in the old cathedral whose interior is so carefully described in *Madame Bovary*.

In August, 1834, Gustave relates to Ernest his first visit to the seaside, a journey by post-chaise down the valley of the Seine to Trouville. Not far below Rouen he sees the château of Robert le Diable, "silent and still and dismantled . . . a riddle to all who behold its brow wrinkled by the ages." He gathers shells on the beach of Trouville and discovers the sea sung by the Romantic poets. "How beautiful is the ocean when

a good storm makes it roar in my ears, or when misty clouds englobe the horizon and it comes dashing on the rocks, O my friend, it's a very beautiful sight." An impression even stronger is made upon his imagination by the drowning of a lady—a disaster that dictates a long elegiac paragraph, punctuated by the "malédiction!" of Dumas' melodramas. He is now writing an historical novel on Isabeau de Bavière; he quotes Victor Hugo, and ends, vexed by the absence of Ernest: "If I didn't have in my head and at my pen-point a French queen of the fifteenth century, I should be completely disgusted with life, and long since a bullet would have set me free of this clownish pleasantry which is called life."

One smiles at the Romantic rhetoric. But this exaggeration shows how school-boys rebelled during the eighteen-thirties, under masters naturally classical and then intent upon pleasing a reactionary bureaucracy. Students were forbidden to read *Werther*, Byron, *Faust* and the new literature written by Hugo and his followers. Professors had created a new sin, and adolescence never failed to take a new sin seriously. Flaubert recalled this rebellion long afterward in the preface to the *Dernières chansons* of his friend Bouilhet. "I know not what school-boys' dreams are now, but ours were superbly extravagant. . . . While enthusiastic souls longed for dramatic passions, with gondolas, black masks and noble ladies swooning in post-chaises among the Calabrian hills, a few more sombre heroes, infatuated with their compatriot

Armand Carrel, aspired to the tumult of the press or the tribune, the glory of conspirators. . . . But we were not merely lovers of insurrection, of the Middle Ages, of the Orient; we were, above all else, lovers of Art; our tasks finished, literature would begin; we ruined our eyes reading novels in the dormitories, we carried daggers in our pockets like Antony, nay more, through disgust with life, B—— blew out his brains with a pistol, A—— hanged himself with his cravat; little praise was certainly ours, but what hatred of all platitudes! what aspirations toward grandeur! what respect for the masters! how we admired Victor Hugo!"

At fifteen, Flaubert considered the standard-bearer of Romanticism as a sort of demi-god. His niece asserts that he read, at school, all his dramas, a fact proved by the epigraphs, allusions and echoes found in both the juvenilia and the letters. Young Hugo founded *Le Conservateur littéraire;* Flaubert at thirteen starts a school journal in manuscript, *Art et progrès.* Much of its gossip on plays and artists has a personal interest: his confusion of the violinist Ole Bull and Oldbuck shows he had read Scott's *Antiquary,* even then. Theatrical items also fill out his letters during the summer of 1835.

The boy certainly bought and read many plays. He mentions Dumas' *Antony* and *Catherine Howard,* Delavigne's *Les enfants d'Edouard,* Herbin's *Jeanne de Flandre* and *Les vieux péchés.* He also read Barante's *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne, Notre-*

Dame de Paris, Dumas' *La tour de Nesle* (Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 326), *Othello,* possibly in Vigny's adaptation, plays by Voltaire and Beaumarchais, novels by Walter Scott. He adopts as his *nom de plume* Gustave Antuoskothi Koclott (*Corr.,* July 2, 1835), a name in which we may recognize bits of Antony, Scott and his own, with a vague Polish air, probably inspired by sympathy for the refugees from Poland, one of whom, Orlowski, was his sister's music master (*Corr.,* March 24, 1837).

He is already a Romanticist. Hence in his letters he violently echoes the Romantic protest against the idea of a dramatic censorship (*Corr.,* August, 1835). He is a radical, too, for he is curious to see the insurrectionist of Lyons, Caussidière, and the revolutionary Lagrange, whom he calls "the son of the century, like Napoleon and Victor Hugo." In Lagrange, Gustave finds "all the poetry of reaction;" Lagrange, "an object of curses and envy, proscribed in this world, will be God in the next." This dithyramb hints that besides Dumas' *Antony,* Flaubert has read largely in Pichot's translation of Byron. "I am now working like a demon," he writes on the fourteenth of August, 1835: "getting up at half-past three in the morning." And then he echoes *Childe Harold* (II, 39) or possibly the famous Preface of *Mademoiselle de Maupin*: "Let us keep busy with Art, which, greater than nations, crowns and kings, is always there, suspended amidst enthusiasm, with its diadem of God."

Flaubert was then thirteen. *Frédégonde,* the play

completed in July of that year, has disappeared; but we have several pages of the journal *Art et progrès,* dated for us by an allusion to the melodrama *La nonne sanglante,* an imitation of an episode in Lewis' *Monk* which was performed in February of 1835 (Coleman, *Flaubert's literary development, etc.,* xi). This journal is to be found in the first volume of the *Œuvres de jeunesse.* So we may now turn to the juvenilia, which the author's Norman sense of order and his sentimentality have preserved almost in their entirety (*Corr.,* I, 204). These three fat volumes, all written before the narrative of the tour in Brittany and the first version of *La tentation de saint Antoine,* allow us to follow Flaubert from his thirteenth birthday to his twenty-third, through every stage of his astounding apprenticeship to his life's ideal.

The *Œuvres de jeunesse* begin with a *Voyage en enfer,* reminiscent of *Faust* and of the Faust-inspired drama, *Ahasvérus,* published in 1833 by the philosopher Edgar Quinet. "And I was on the top of Mount Athos, and from it I looked in contemplation upon the world. . . . And Satan appeared to me, and Satan said: 'Come with me, look, see; and thou shalt behold my kingdom.' ". . . This opening, the scene of which is probably suggested by *Childe Harold's pilgrimage* (the "godly Eremite . . . on lonely Athos . . . watching." . . . *Canto* II, 27), hints that Flaubert already knew at least one poem of Byron. But the fragment,

which at first sight might seem only a school-boy Vision of Sin, made up of memories of Quinet, *Faust* or *Le diable boiteux,* has a greater significance. For all critics discover in it the germ of that typical creation of Flaubert's youth, the original version of *La tentation de saint Antoine.*

The first volume of the *Œuvres de jeunesse* contains the work of the four years from 1835 to the end of 1838: that is, from the author's thirteenth to his seventeenth birthday. It reflects all the horrors of a moribund Romanticism. At thirteen he pens a portrait of Lord Byron after the biographical study made by Pichot for his translation, and does a pastiche of Mérimée's *Mateo Falcone* which is more horrible than the original, because of the two coffins needed at the end. The other pieces of this year are inspired by French history; Michelet had recently begun to publish his masterpiece, and Scott's novels and Dumas' plays had shown the boy how to find in history the violent emotions his nature craved. Nor must we forget, in our summing up of influences, the picturesque and still half-mediæval city of Flaubert's birth. "Do you know Normandy," he asks, "that fair land so full of old châteaux, each of which evokes the memory of a famous name? . . . Normandy, so full of old legends and fantastic tales, of popular traditions, all connected with some shred of our history during the Middle Ages?"

Thus begins the story of *Marguerite de Bourgogne,* a pendant to Dumas' *La tour de Nesle* and not un-

worthy of its gory model, for the queen is strangled with her own hair. Another sanguinary masterpiece is *La mort du duc de Guise,* inspired by Barante's *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne.* Quite insignificant is the bit of historical foolery called *Chevrin ou le roi de Prusse;* but in *Le moine des Chartreux* the 'prentice writer reaches a depth of horror which presages the later juvenilia. For the monk who steals the dead prior's ring from the corpse catches his robe in the nails of the violated coffin, falls and fractures his skull and dies; years later the fleshless skeleton is found in the crypt, like the bones of Hugo's dwarf Quasimodo.

More than triple in quantity, the work of Flaubert's fifteenth year (1836) is even more pretentiously terrific. *Deux mains sur une couronne* is probably the novel which saved the boy-author from suicide two years before: at any rate Isabeau de Bavière appears in this tale suggested by Barante. *Un secret de Philippe le prudent* concerns the monk who had once been Charles the Great, and *Chronique normande du dixième siècle* the reign of Charles IV of France. *Un parfum à sentir ou les baladins* is modern in setting and was probably written after a visit to a fair at Rouen; but its plot was clearly suggested by the plot of Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris.* The preface quotes the motto of that novel, *anangkè;* the hideous but virtuous Marguerite reminds one of the gentle monster Quasimodo, and her rival is certainly as heartless and

handsome as Captain Phœbus. The tale is a triumph of that maudlin grotesque which affects no one but the writer; for viewed through the tears of his emotion, the woman cast into the lion's cage has less reality than her decomposed body discussed at the Morgue by the two medical students. Two months after this debauch of *sensiblerie* Flaubert returned to the apocalyptic manner of *Ahasvérus* in *La femme du monde,* a glorification of Death, perhaps suggested by Gautier's lines in *La comédie de la mort* (*La mort dans la vie,* end; Cf. also *Ahasvérus,* 217-218): "Courtisane éternelle environnant le monde avec ses maigres bras." This opuscule was the work of only half an hour.

"'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense"—

Byron had said in *Childe Harold* (III, 6). "What a pleasure it is to compose!" scribbles Flaubert on the last page of *Les baladins*: "to write, is to take possession of the world!" At this time, too, he wrote rapidly and easily, for he finished this forty-page story in ten days. In general, the style is not very much worse than Dumas' lower levels of diction in his dramas. Descharmes states somewhere that the manuscripts have few corrections, and certainly the flow of phrase and the paragraph-rhythm show a natural lyricism; the boy is writing in order to express his feelings, with the boiling verve of his early letters.

And he did express himself more clearly than he knew in his next story, *La peste à Florence,* whose setting came from Boccaccio's *Decameron.* Young

Flaubert is reflected in his hero of twenty, Garcia de Médicis, who "for twenty years had been the victim of the railleries, the humiliations and the insults of his family." As Gustave did not get from his father the literary encouragement he had from the Chevalier household—for ten years he had to hide his writing to prevent ridicule (*Corr.*, I, 254)—he thinks himself as persecuted and misunderstood as any Romanticist; so he makes his hero Garcia jealous of his brother, "the elder, the beloved of the family: to him all the honours, glory, titles and dignities; to poor Garcia obscurity and contempt." This explains the epigraph taken from Dumas' *Don Juan de Marana*: "C'est que je te hais d'une haine de frère." We surmise that Gustave had suffered from comparisons with the more docile Achille, then a brilliant young medical student; for in the story Garcia kills his hated elder brother.

Flaubert was near-sighted and naturally timid (*Corr.*, II, 379; I, 215). Though endowed with great physical vigour and stature—he was destined to attain the height of six feet—this young giant did not escape the defect of imaginative natures, quick to see every danger. Physical fear he overcame by "educating his nerves," as he tells Louise Colet (*Corr.*, Oct. 20, 1846). "From my very first year at boarding school, I would steal out at night so as to go prowling about the yards alone, although I was dying of fear; Thursdays I used to climb into church-belfries and walk on balustrades at the risk of breaking my neck: all this so as to become brave, as I have done." Well and good! This

victory over physical fear does not mean that he conquered his feeling of inferiority, as we may see by careful reading of the *Journal des Goncourt.*

At any rate his truculence continues. It deforms even the tranquil inspiration of Nodier or Scott's *Antiquary,* which combines with local colour *à la Musset* to produce *Bibliomanie,* published in a small literary magazine of Rouen, *Le Colibri,* on February 12, 1837 (Cf. Maynial, 82, 122). Its publication even in such a journal shows the prevailing taste: one could properly end a tale of jealousy between book-collectors by a conflagration and a series of horrible murders! And the last story of 1836 has a similar development. *Rage et impuissance* begins with a first sketch for *Un cœur simple:* Flaubert portrays an old servant-maid whose life had been spent in monotonous slavery, "and who, in her narrow circle, had also had her passions, her anguish and her griefs;"[2] but the end of the story seeks to mount to a Himalaya of blood-curdling horror. For it describes the sufferings of a man buried alive, who dies blaspheming and devouring the flesh of his own arm.

It is true that a tale of this type is related as a nightmare in Gautier's *Les jeunes-France* (1833), which parodies in many of its stories the "ferocious school,"

[2] This is probably based on memories of Flaubert's childhood like *Un cœur simple;* we know that Mme. Aubain was his great-aunt Mme. Allais, who lived at Honfleur, and that her maid Félicité and the parrot were drawn from life. See *Trois contes, Notes,* p. 65, and *Souvenirs intimes,* xviii.

so popular then that even Balzac sacrificed to it in writing "for the ladies" his horrific *Elixir de longue vie*. But I prefer to think that Flaubert's violence in *Rage et impuissance* is not entirely imitative. For the frightful dreams he relates in the *Mémoires d'un fou* (*Chap.* IV) show clearly the brand left upon his imagination by the dissecting-room of the hospital, which opened out on the garden where he played as a boy. "How many times we climbed up the trellis, my sister and I," says Flaubert in his *Correspondance* (II, 310), "and hanging in the vines gazed curiously at the corpses stretched out there." He even found ways to enter these forbidden precincts and play with the skeletons (Descharmes, 13, n.).

Need we wonder that at twenty-four he can write to his mistress: "the sight of a beautiful woman makes me think of her skeleton (*Corr.*, I, 194)"? Here is the ultimate source of the horrors added to the deaths of Emma Bovary and the servant Félicité, the gore that besmears the battle-scenes of *Salammbô*, and the gruesome fads indulged in by Bouvard and Pécuchet.

The violence of *Rage et impuissance* may also reveal another crisis in the boy's repressed youth. For with all their brutality, the stories he had written before are mainly sanguinary, like all the tales preferred by children, at first not fully conscious of any reality in all the horrors they delight in. But, with the coming of adolescence, imagination develops no less than the emotions. Shortly after his fourteenth birthday

Flaubert terminates *Les baladins* (April, 1836) with a realistic page on the decomposed corpse of the heroine. The realism and maudlin pity of this tale is followed by the hatred expressed in *La peste à Florence,* then by the anguish of an impotent death-struggle in the story of a man buried alive. This emotional crescendo merely reflects the crisis of puberty: and the biographer can only lament that we have no published letters of the year 1836.

The same emotional tension continues into 1837. Flaubert has now discovered Chateaubriand's *René*; he has shuddered with horror at the thought that his sister Caroline, seen lying so still on her bed, is perhaps not asleep but dead—a thought that comes to every brother not devoid of imagination—and in *La dernière heure* he relates the agony of a young man about to end his life by asphyxiation, after watching all night beside the bier of his dead sister. Flaubert has discovered *Faust*: his niece tells us how he devoured its pages while walking in a park across the Seine, and heard the Easter church-bells of Rouen chiming as he read the poetry of Gœthe—an impression which left his head whirling and his feet "no longer conscious of the earth beneath them." Flaubert has read over his beloved *Ahasvérus* (or remembered the line which predicts another universe after this), and felt again the black Byronic joy that fills his earliest composition, *Le voyage en enfer.* So in *Le rêve*

d'enfer he portrays a proud young alchemist, whose bleak misogyny shows the boy idealist's reaction against the encroaching claims of the flesh. "Away with every need of life, all material reality! everything for thought and ecstasy, a vague indefinite ecstasy, which views itself in the moon and which derives from instinct and temperament, as the fragrance from the flower."

An idealised Flaubert stalks behind the mask of the noble alchemist Arthur, the young duke living as a recluse in his château in Germany. Satan tempts the world-wearied student with the love of the fair peasant girl Julietta, but the soulless and immortal duke, like Melmoth in Maturin and Balzac, like the Wandering Jew in Quinet's epic *Ahasvérus,* craves only release from a world which holds no happiness for him. He tells Satan of his past, "when he was happy and free, when he had within him something pure and virgin," when he could dream of the poetry of a previous existence, sunk in reveries beside the sea. Then "I came back from a state of ecstasy and bliss to life and boredom. . . . I tried to be like other men, to have their passions, their interests, to act as they do, it was in vain. . . . Then everything turned black before my eyes . . . my life became a long death-agony, and the earth a tomb wherein they buried men alive. . . . And then, when I had seen races of men and empires pass before me, when I had ceased to feel anything that made my heart beat, when all things were dead and paralysed to my intellect, I said to myself: 'Fool, that

desirest happiness and hast no soul! Fool . . . that dost comprehend thy nothingness, that dost comprehend all things, that lovest naught, that believest that the flesh maketh happy!'" Thus run the ravings of this young Faust, in a castle such as Mrs. Radcliffe loves to describe. René-like, he even dreams of suicide, like so many heroes of the later juvenilia, and like the author himself (*Corr.*, II, 230).

This black pessimism is personal enough to give us pause. No debauch of history or historical drama or romance will account for it, no overdose of Volney nor even of René's reveries, whose blight we must admit from now on in the juvenilia. No, there is a love-affair behind this page, written no longer by a boy, but by an adolescent. To explain such a story and to read aright the brutal tales that follow we must turn to a confession written nearly two years later but referring mainly to the summer vacation of 1836. Otherwise we shall be lost in a morass of nightmare emotions, inexplicable and ridiculous as all nightmares are until we hold their clue.

This confession is entitled *Mémoires d'un fou.* Descharmes (64) and Professor Coleman (4-6) both ascribe it to the autumn of 1838, and both accept its veracity. Flaubert dedicated it to his friend Alfred Le Poittevin, to whom he had evidently promised a complete confession of his loves, for only such a promise would explain the words: "It is a vow I have made

to relate everything." He defers this confession, which begins in Chapter X, for even on paper our young Rousseau hesitates to approach his secret. His pen marks time in trifling memories omitted in the story of his childhood; he lays the manuscript aside for three weeks. Then, "with beating heart" and "an emotion wholly religious," he relates "his tenderest and most painful memories"—the story of his first love, Maria.

It happened at Trouville in the summer of 1836, during Flaubert's fifteenth year (Descharmes, 69, and Coleman, 2, n. 2). Dr. Flaubert owned an estate in the neighborhood of this broad, safe beach (Du Camp, *Souvenirs littéraires,* II, 337 ff.), and the family often went there for their summer holidays in August or September. In those years Trouville was quite unspoiled by fashion or foreigners; it was still an undiscovered seaside village, solitary and charming, frequented only by a few artists—a village of close-set cabins draped with fish-nets, an Arcadia filled with half-naked children and gay with the red and blue costumes of its hardy fisher-folk.

In this Arcadia, two years before meeting Maria, Flaubert had first played at love. For "with every woman you see," he confesses, "you ask yourself, isn't that love? You strive to love in order to make yourself a man (*Chapter* XV)." Notice that this tallies perfectly with the situation of Flaubert's hero in the *Rêve d'enfer.* A thirteen-year-old Paul seeking his Virginie, Flaubert had found her in the elder of two English girls, the Collier sisters, who with their mother

came afterward to Rouen. There the girls became spectators and co-actors in the famous theatre, and Gustave soon came to thee-and-thou them and kiss them like his own sister. After some hesitation his fancy picked out the elder, Gertrude, whose name he later gave to one of the characters in his play *Le sexe faible.* There were books lent and poetry read and walks together; when spring came he once pursued and kissed Gertrude and then tried to scribble some wretched verses to her, vainly seeking in his heart the passion he knew only in books. The *Mémoires* show the effect of his courtship on the girl who was then fifteen or sixteen; and Flaubert will remember the candour of her behaviour in depicting the infatuation of little Louise for the hero of the final *Education sentimentale* (136). But in the blindness and timidity of his early teens he had let this love escape him, and at Maria's coming Gertrude was forgotten.

At thirteen he was too young to love, like his alchemist Arthur. But the girl was old enough, and the portrait she has left us of young Flaubert amply shows the eyes she saw him with. We must give this portrait before relating the story of the genuine passion that ravaged his heart and senses in 1836.

"Gustave Flaubert at that time was like a young Greek," wrote Gertrude Collier (then Mrs. Tennant) to the novelist's niece. "In the full bloom of youth, he was tall and slender, supple and graceful as an athlete, unconscious of his physical and intellectual gifts, little concerned with the impression he produced

and absolutely indifferent to conventionalities. His dress consisted of a red flannel shirt, coarse woolen trousers of blue, a scarf of the same colour drawn tightly around his hips, and a hat worn carelessly, or no hat at all. When I would speak to him of fame or influence to wield, as desirable things that I should value, he would listen, smile and look superbly indifferent. He admired the beautiful in nature, art and literature, and would live for that, he used to say, without any personal interest. He never dreamt of glory or of gain. Was it not enough that a thing was true and beautiful? His great joy was to find something he could consider worthy of admiration. The charm of his society was in his enthusiasm for all that was noble, and the charm of his mind in its intense individuality. He hated all hypocrisy. What his nature lacked was an interest in external things, in useful things. If anyone chanced to say that religion, politics or business was as interesting as literature and art, he would open his eyes with surprise and pity. To be a man of letters, an artist, that alone made life worth while (*Souvenirs intimes,* xvii)."

One may object that this portrait may not be wholly the Flaubert of 1836, because the miniaturist also knew her model five years later in Paris. But not a line of the sketch belies the testimony of Flaubert's letters and juvenilia; here is our young genius with his head in the clouds, in the days when he, too, lived in Arcadia. And as we turn back to the *Mémoires d'un fou* (*Chapter* X), we can see the slender youth

in red and blue, who, walking along the beach at the bathing hour, stopped to rescue and place in safety a cloak endangered by the swiftly rising tide.[3]

That noon, while at luncheon at the village inn, Flaubert heard a soft voice thank him for his gallantry: the owner of the cloak was sitting at a near-by table. He turned to reply or rather to ask curtly what it was, for he confesses he was "preoccupied," and she explained. We must now leave the story to Flaubert, because, through and in spite of its emotion, it shows already the vividness of sense-perception, both visual, auditive and olfactory, that marks the future master of observed reality:

"She looked at me.

"I lowered my eyes and blushed. What a look, truly! How lovely that woman was! I can still see those ardent pupils under their black eyebrows, turn and rest upon me like a sun. She was tall and dark, her magnificent black hair fell in locks upon her shoulders; her nose was Greek, her eyes burning, her brows high and admirably arched, her skin glowing and soft with a sort of golden bloom; she was slender and lovely, and veins of azure were visible, winding

[3] As Gertrude Collier gave Caroline Flaubert a shawl which after his sister's death the novelist carefully preserved (*Corr.*, I, 272), the incident may really have happened when he met the Collier girls. But I consider this unlikely because the rescue recurs in its essential details (although the cloak becomes a shawl) at the meeting of the hero and the heroine of the final *Education sentimentale*, which consecrates the memory of his passion for Maria.

over her flushed and glowing bosom. Add to that a delicate down that shaded her upper lip and gave her face a look of strength and energy, eclipsing the beauty of a blonde.[4] . . . She spoke slowly; her voice was musical, soft and low."

And then he describes her gown, "of thin white muslin, revealing the soft outlines of her arms;" her hat, "a white capote with a single pink bow;" the hand that ties it, "plump and tiny, one of those hands you dream of." He describes her bathing in the sea: "I envied the wave . . . that beat against her side and covered her panting breast with foam; I saw her limbs under the wet garments that covered her, her panting heart, her heaving bosom; mechanically I watched her foot stepping on the sand, my gaze remained fixed upon her footprints and I could have wept to see the waves slowly efface them. . . ."

Flaubert's senses are, of course, aroused. But the boy who "heard the water dripping" from Maria's garments, who "sensed her half-naked woman's body passing with the fragrance of the sea," who notes his violently beating heart and the blood pulsing in his temples, who "can still see the waves flowing in all around and the beach festooned with foam," still hear "the confused voices of the bathers, and the noise of her steps and breathing" as she passes: the boy who is struck dumb as he "feels his heart for the first time," who is conscious of "something mystical and

[4] Cf. Byron, *Childe Harold*, I, 58: "Who 'round the North for paler dames would seek?"

strange as a new sense, lapped in intimate and tender emotions and cradled by vague and vaporous images," is more than a mere sensuously amorous youth; he is the future Flaubert, describing a memory sharply cut as all his memories, vivid as an hallucination. Into all his novels will go touches like these: "A trifle, a fold of her gown, her foot, her smile, her most insignificant speech affected me like supernatural things (Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 45, 47; *Education sentimentale,* 78-79)."

Maria has a girl-baby and a husband, who is mentioned last. She nurses the child in Flaubert's presence, disclosing to the adolescent

Les seins nus et pourprés de ses tentations.

Her husband is "something between an artist and a bagman," he is mustachioed, "an intrepid smoker, impulsive, good-natured and friendly;" he loves good-cheer enough to walk three leagues to buy a melon; "he had come there in his own carriage with his dog, his wife, his baby and twenty-five bottles of Rhine wine." They soon make acquaintance, "for in the country or while travelling, people speak to each other more readily." And Flaubert does not fail to note the silly and hackneyed complaints about the inconveniences, the bad cooking and the lack of clean linen at country inns. But we must let him speak again, for he describes a background whose dim lighting is remembered in a kitchen scene of *Madame Bovary* (29).

"It was certainly such a motive that set us talking for the first time," he says, apropos of the herd-instinct that makes summer friendships. "The afternoon was hot and the sun sent its arrows into the dining-room despite the shutters. A few artists, Maria and her husband and I had lingered, drinking grogs. . . . We talked about literature, an inexhaustible subject with women; I did my share of it, I spoke for a long time and with spirit; Maria and I had absolutely the same feelings about matters of art. I have never heard anyone respond to it with more candour and with less pretence. . . ."

We must also note the boating-party he enjoys under the summer moon. For it becomes a pastiche of Lamartine's famous poem *Le lac;* Flaubert is striving to discover in life what he has found in Romantic books. So for him this excursion has "all the magic of a dream and all the pleasures of actuality." His realistic senses enjoy and note not merely the moonlight and the lapping waves and the music of Maria's voice: "I felt the curve of her shoulder and the contact of her gown." Still more definitely in the pages that follow we perceive that Flaubert's angel was a woman, and that his reaction to her charms was too definite for his tranquillity.

She was a woman, this sculptural Maria, rounded in form and spirit by her maternity. Descharmes (*Chapter* IV) opined that she was Marie, wife of the music-

publisher Maurice Schlésinger, and we have no facts contradictory to this theory. She was about twenty-six years old, says Du Camp (II, 336), who also relates the story. Flaubert's niece states that he met the couple at Trouville and six years later renewed their acquaintance in Paris, while a student at the law-school. The husband, a genial and vulgar Jew, probably half German, reappears as Jacques Arnoux in the final *Education sentimentale*; he is drawn with a sharper pen in Wagner's autobiography and in Mme. Adolphe Adam's *Lettres sur la musique française,* published in *La revue de Paris* during 1903. Flaubert's niece adds that his wife was "the ideal woman of my uncle's dreams" in his youth, and "the inspiration of the character of Mme. Arnoux (*Corr.,* V, 236, n.)." And certainly the sketch of Marie Schlésinger in the *Mémoires d'un fou,* where Flaubert gives her the real name of her baby daughter, Maria (Cf. Coleman, 2, n. 2), accords perfectly with the physical and moral traits he will later lend to his only thoroughly attractive character, Mme. Arnoux of the second *Education sentimentale.* Hers is a portrait dedicated to the memory of a first love whose embers never lost their vital warmth.

We can see this in Flaubert's letters. When Schlésinger died and his widow had to leave France, his love revealed itself: he had hoped "to spend the end of his life not far from her. (*Corr.,* IV, 66)." Flaubert was then fifty. In September of the same year he laments that his mother's health prevents his join-

ing her on the beach at Trouville, "where he first met her and which for him still bears the imprint of her feet." The now middle-aged novelist calls her his "chère et vieille amie," his "éternelle tendresse," even his "ever-beloved (*Corr.*, IV, 115)," and cannot see her handwriting without a throbbing heart (*Corr.*, IV, 132)." "I have been given a dog," he writes in this letter—evidently thinking of her pet Newfoundland, which he had risked his life pursuing on the cliffs near Trouville in 1836, in order to capture upon its shaggy head the touch of lips beyond his reach. "And I go walking with it, watching the effect of the sunlight upon the yellowing leaves. For me the future has no dreams left, but the days of old come back bathed in a golden cloud, and on that background of light, from which beloved shades hold out their arms to me, the face shining out in greatest splendour is yours. Yes, yours. Oh, poor old Trouville!"

A year later, in 1873, Flaubert "re-related" his pursuit of Maria's dog to Goncourt (*Journal,* V, 99). "Punching my chest," writes the gossipy diarist, "with fingers which I felt like fencing-foils, he tried to prove to me that no one, no one in the world, had ever been so deeply in love. . . . A passion that seized him in the third year before he finished school, and which he kept buried in his heart until he was thirty-two." So he finally told her in 1854, when his less frequent letters to Louise Colet betray her jealousy of his work and their coming break.

"I have had but one real passion," wrote Flaubert

in 1846 (*Corr.*, I, 262). "I was not yet fifteen, and it lasted till I was eighteen." And he adds later (*Corr.*, III, 258), "I had in my youth a love that went beyond all measure, a love unrequited and profound. Nights spent in looking at the moon, plans of abduction and travel in Italy, dreams of glory for her sake, tortures of body and soul, quiverings at the perfume of a shoulder and sudden blanchings before a glance—all that I knew. . . . Each of us has in his heart a chamber for a queen. I have walled up mine, but it is not destroyed."

A first love, gilded by all the dreams of Romanticism! a real love, but one in which books had their due share. For we may be sure that Flaubert imagined himself a real Antony as he watched Maria's lighted windows after the boat-ride. "I had fire in my veins," he cries in jealous anguish: "I could see Maria in her bed, and then I stopped, for the rest made me shudder." Flaubert will remember this sleepless night of his fifteenth year in the first *Education sentimentale* (p. 152) and even in the later novel he will write at fifty (p. 109). Maria never encouraged him and apparently did not even say good-bye on leaving Trouville; but none the less the anguish of her departure, the dust of her fleeing carriage, and a hundred details of her person, garments and gestures will recur like a fetish of lost ecstasies in every novel written by Flaubert. The over-timid lover remembers longest.

The *Mémoires* tell us that he again sought Maria at

Trouville in 1838, two years after his first meeting. He did not find her; her husband alone had been there, accompanied by another woman. We conclude that Flaubert's dream was made fairer by her absence, for he adds: "It was now that I loved her . . . alone on the beach, in the woods and in the fields I created her image, speaking to me, looking at me." Marie Schlésinger may have deeply influenced the novelist's art in thus stimulating his creative memory. And we wonder whether in the calm of their maturity Flaubert ever showed to his "éternelle tendresse" this confession of the *Mémoires d'un fou:* "Do you know that I have not passed a single night, not a day nor an hour, without thinking of you, without seeing you rising from the waves?"

Vera incessu patuit dea. The ocean did not efface the footprints of Maria, which are traceable in the four stories Flaubert wrote before the tale of the alchemist, and in the seven, not yet considered, which lead up to these *Mémoires.* A first love racking both his soul and his senses, an unrequited, bitter love, soiled even with the certainty that his idol was wedded to a faithless cad, a blind mute love whose outcome broke to bits his belief in Romantic passion and its conquering force, a love which disillusioned and humiliated him—had to find expression. So in these stories filled with a boy's furious reaction to his aborted passion, we behold again the goddess that arose for him from the sea. Where we do not see her footprints, we discover the mire his secret suffering has trampled into them.

II

ADOLESCENCE

We took up the *Mémoires d'un fou,* of 1838, in order to explain the violence of the juvenilia after that summer of 1836 which brought Flaubert's first love. We must now turn back to the other 'prentice works of 1837 and 1838, whose composition precedes the writing of the *Mémoires,* and consider them in the light of that confession.

We have seen that the *Mémoires d'un fou* contain several pages of mockery. But the boy who at nine would collect the silly remarks of his father's patients is only complementary to the boy in love with books and his dreams; when life fails to live up to these, he weeps and laughs; with all the Romanticists, laughter is apt to follow after tears. The cynical ending of *Un parfum à sentir* is an example of this reaction of mockery, which first entirely dominates one of his youthful compositions in *Une leçon d'histoire naturelle, genre commis,* published in *Le Colibri* of Rouen in March, 1837. *Le commis* was written just after the story of the soulless alchemist, *Le rêve d'enfer,* and probably in revulsion from its misanthropic idealism. It is a satiric portrait in the style of the "Physiologies" due to the pens and pencils of those who saw the meteoric rise of the bourgeois parvenu under the rule

of Louis-Philippe. But as nothing remains humorous after it becomes universal, we can only partially recover the spirit of 1830 by opening a volume of Daumier or Gavarni, or by reading over *Le gendre de Monsieur Poirier.*

Flaubert himself ironically mentions (*Education sentimentale,* 202), these caricatural Physiologies, of which there were literally scores in the early thirties, embracing every social type. Balzac himself had written a *Physiologie de l'employé;* Flaubert will try to portray the Clerk, borrowing one or two details from Balzac, and storing up for future use the name that Balzac, with his unerring instinct, gives to the much-envied Head of the Office: Monsieur Bouvard. Flaubert, *en passant,* is so impressed by the bovine character of this name that it suggests to him not merely Bovary, but appellations for two other types of stupidity, the Comte de Bouvigny in *Le candidat* and the collector Bouvignard in *Le château des cœurs.*

The Clerk is the most interesting animal of our times, the young cynic begins; he is short, round, fat and unwrinkled, wears silver spectacles, expectorates, and says "God bless you" when you sneeze. He is garbed in nankeen trousers, on which he spreads his bandanna handkerchief to save them from ink-spots. He has a duck waistcoat and a frock coat, which is as essential to his habitat as water is to fish, although in his office he labours in shirt-sleeves. He reads the ultra-conservative newspapers *Le Constitutionnel* or *Le Journal des Débats,* enjoys the novels of Paul de

Kock, talks about the thaw, the snails, the paving of the quays, the gas or the new iron bridge. (Flaubert, as always when he mentions a city, is speaking of his native Rouen.) The Clerk revels in heat, and loves to pile more wood into the red-hot stove, the door of which he opens with a ruler (Cf. *Corr.*, III, 23). He likes to stand in front of the stove, to polish his long finger-nails, to shout angrily at those who leave the door open, to discuss the oil-lamps, which hurt his eyes: that is why he wears that enormous cap which casts its shadow upon his neighbour's work. This cap, buckled under his chin, will reappear in the headgear of Charles Bovary and old Pécuchet.[1] In short, *Bouvard et Pécuchet* only develops into a grotesque epic (Maynial, III, ff.) the portrait of the Clerk that Flaubert first outlined at the age of fifteen.

This sketch, and the tale *Bibliomanie* of six weeks before, represent Flaubert's sole ventures into print before the publication of a few extracts from *La tentation de saint Antoine* in *La revue de Paris* fourteen years later: these extracts were all that Flaubert gave to the public of the many pages produced in the nineteen years that intervene between the appearance of *Le commis* and *Madame Bovary*. *Le commis* is the article which he mentions in his letter of March 24, 1837, proudly informing Ernest that he will correct the proof-sheets on Wednesday.

[1] This was the actual name of one of Flaubert's schoolmates in the Collège de Rouen: see Maynial, 54.

In the same letter he wonders where he can obtain a Byron, for Alfred has gone away leaving his copy locked in his bookcase. This letter, succeeding a gap of nineteen months in the epistolary record, shows us how rapidly the boy is growing up, for it mentions an approaching dinner to be given by his sister's music-master Orlowski, and adds that no one leaves these national festivals of the Polish refugees until he is drunk and has vomited five or six times. So Flaubert did not need to go to books in order to describe an orgy, that banality of Romantic fiction! And one suspects that his mentor in such experience was Alfred Le Poittevin, his gloomy and dissipated young philosopher-friend, who first comes into the *Correspondance* in this letter. This pal, five years older than he, was now destined to influence him deeply (Cf. Descharmes' *Introduction,* A. Le Poittevin, *Une promenade de Bélial,* xxix).

Alfred's pessimism apparently helped Flaubert to develop his notion of modern degeneracy—a really personal reaction, although it smacks of Byron and of the vitriolic Preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin.* For this Romantic theory of decadence explodes in a letter to Ernest dated three months later (June 24, 1837), and written after two days spent entirely with Alfred. "Oh! this fine civilisation!"—cries Flaubert: "this stupid lump that has invented railways, prisons, rectal-pumps, cream tarts, royalty and the guillotine!" There are nearly three pages of this grotesque lyricism. The young man affirms that he has now ceased to

write and would gladly postpone even his beloved historical studies, his notes on Michelet, "for the fairest woman is scarcely fair when on the table of an amphitheatre, with her intestines resting on her nose, her leg laid open and a half-burned cigar lying on her foot. Criticism is a dismal thing: to descend into the depths of knowledge and find only vanity, to analyse the human heart and find egoism in it, to understand the world only to see in it unhappiness alone. Oh! how much I prefer mere poetry. . . ." And his willingness to exchange all his school-books for two lines of Lamartine or Hugo hints of semester essays composed despite the lure of June.

Then came vacation with its joys, for he visited Trouville and Nogent. At the home of his grandparents he found amusement in working on a long historical essay, *Esquisse de la lutte du sacerdoce et de l'empire.* The outline given in *Œuvres de jeunesse* (III, 320) looks like the summary of a course of lectures or readings; Flaubert wrote it for his teacher Chéruel, as we are told in his letter from Nogent, September 23, 1837. Yet despite this task, October 8 saw the completion of the tale *Quidquid volueris.* Flaubert has resumed the pen laid down under the weight of Alfred's gloom, and his new pessimism, which he later attributes in part to the study of history, now blossoms in a most terrific flower.

The chief inspiration of *Quidquid volueris* is Dumas' drama *Antony*; Flaubert's heroine even has the same name as Dumas'. His Adèle, too, is blue-eyed and

sickly, and romantically devoted to music, poetry and melancholy reverie. We see this heroine at her window framed in flowers—like Emma Bovary (46) and like a grisette in the final *Education sentimentale* (46), —throwing a kiss to her departing lover. We witness her wedding to Paul the sportsman and follow her through the splendours of the nuptial ball. But, hah! —in the background lurks a bent and enigmatic figure, dark-skinned, thick-lipped and ugly; he is sick with jealousy, and spends the night alone in the garden dreaming of Adèle, after the last lights are spent in the château. This night of anguish is a real memory elaborated in four pages; Flaubert evidently refers to it in *Notes de voyage* (I, 161), and in his letters from Egypt (*Corr.*, I, 390): he had been to a ball at the château of the Marquis de Pomereu, which he will remember in describing Emma Bovary's first ball; his were the sleepless night and the lonely boat-ride at dawn, and the jealousy felt by his hero, since poor Flaubert never learned to dance (*Corr.*, III, 165).[2]

But in what a figure does he travesty himself! For the disappointed lover of the story, the ugly Djalioh,[3] is the offspring of a negress and an orang-outang—a pet brought back from Brazil by Paul, a poetic simian,

[2] An incapacity he gives to the hero of the first *Education sentimentale* (81), to Emma Bovary, who at least does not waltz well (74), and also to the hero of the second *Education sentimentale* (167)!

[3] Djala is the name of the goat in *Notre-Dame de Paris* and Djali will be the name of Emma Bovary's greyhound.

for he plays the violin like the monkey described in *Méditation V* of Balzac's *Physiologie du mariage.* Djalioh has not learned to talk, but Byronic indeed are his thoughts that night, through the boat-ride *à la Lamartine* and during the visit of the wedding party to the monkeys' cages in the garden. For these thoughts Flaubert had but to recall his anguish at Trouville.

And how he remembers in framing his dénouement! He allows two years to pass before his simian Antony vents the tempest hidden in his soul, "like Iceland's volcanoes beneath their snow-blanched summits." Then he permits his hero a vengeance no less terrible than any deed of Hugo's blood-drinking Han d'Islande. One day Djalioh finds Adèle's baby sleeping in its cradle and dashes out its life against the ground; then he violates and murders the mother, and finally brains himself by a headlong dive against the marble fireplace. This violence only typifies the effect of Dumas' drama upon the youth of his day: even the flaccid hero of the final *Education sentimentale* will pose gloomily but innocuously as "Antony the Accursed" (244; Cf. Maigron for the vogue of *Antony*).

Flaubert again used the adultery theme of *Antony* in *Passion et vertu,* finished December 10, 1837, just before his sixteenth birthday. And he really developed it as a first sketch of *Madame Bovary.* His hero Ernest is not "an exceptional soul like those you find in books and plays," he is "un cœur sec, un esprit

juste, et par-dessus tout cela, un chimiste." Ernest is not Homais, however. A thorough master of "that theory of seduction, those principles and rules by which a clever man accomplishes his ends," he is a caricature of Don Juan, like squire Rodolphe in *Madame Bovary*. The heroine Mazza is dreamy and sentimental as Emma, but she will finally justify her name. During the absence of her husband she receives Ernest and suffers his talk of poetry and love according to Byron; then spends half the night in amorous reveries, listening to the chiming church-clock and the ceaseless wind and rain. "Who has not felt, in hours of fever and delirium, those impulses, those convulsions of a soul tossing and writhing incessantly under the weight of thoughts that cannot be defined, so full are they of torment and pleasure?" This is significant; and no less so is Mazza's reaction at love's fulfilment a week later: "she wondered whether, beyond this pleasure, there were not another still greater delight . . . for she had an unquenchable thirst for infinite loves, for passions that knew no bounds."

Mazza is tortured by that hypertrophy of the imagination that her creator confesses in his *Mémoires d'un fou,* and which he will give to Emma Bovary. Disillusion only increases her malady; "she gives herself up entirely to the torrent that sweeps her onward," until her passion becomes a frenzy, a rage, a mad craving which she feels in her blood, her veins and even under her finger-nails! If Flaubert felt this, there is no doubt about his congenital neurasthenia.

Mazza longs for a life alone with her lover, in a dream-Elysium such as adolescents imagine, a mountain in the middle of the sea; Ernest meanwhile awakes to a natural fear of the tempest he has aroused, and flees to Mexico. When she receives his farewell letter, Mazza vainly pursues him to Havre, and seeing his ship disappear below the horizon, she even thinks of suicide. But she returns to Paris instead, hoping against hope that he will return: in the three pages Flaubert gives to this carriage ride we may perhaps read his own reveries as he rode back from Trouville to Rouen, after the departure of his Maria.

And as with him, lapse of time brings no relief to his infatuated heroine. Mazza is quite unmoved by the death of her husband, or the deaths of her neglected children; she even rejoices in the freedom she has gained thereby. "Adieu, land of Europe . . . for me America and its flaming soil, its ardent sunlight, its cloudless sky, its lovely nights in groves of palms and plane-trees." (It was thus Flaubert then imagined this land of ours, like Jules in the first *Education sentimentale!*) But a letter reaches Mazza before her ship departs, a long and moralistic letter from her renegade lover, announcing his marriage. His request that she send him a half-litre of prussic acid to use in his work suggests to her the suicide which proves the story is a sketch for *Madame Bovary*.

A poison draught resolves the knot of Dumas' drama *Térésa* and of Hugo's *Hernani.* "Have you any poison left?" inquires King Louis XI of his barber Olivier, in Flaubert's Romantic drama *Loys XI,* which he completed March 3, 1838. Poison and poniard, murder and treachery punctuate this lengthy play, which was based upon two months' reading, but written in two weeks, as the Preface tells us. No less than Flaubert's historical tales, it corroborates his youthful ambition to become the Walter Scott of France (Cf. Du Camp, I, 105), a desire ascribed to his autobiographical hero Frédéric in the second *Education sentimentale* (19). Like Frédéric, Flaubert turns from the Romantic mediæval drama to the more vivid old French Chroniclers for his sources.

Thus *Loys XI* presents to us a portrait of the crafty king which does not much differ from the cliché set up by *Quentin Durward* and *Notre-Dame de Paris.* The very form of the title shows the influence of Comines' *Chronicle,* from which Flaubert obtained most of his details; but Brantôme (II, 329, edition of 1866) furnished the episode inspiring the scene in which the buffoon overhears the king confess to his brother's murder. There are also echoes from the plays of Hugo and Dumas in this drama written in the rhetorical prose of *La tour de Nesle;* and one may find an echo of Delavigne's tragedy *Louis XI* (1832) in the confession extorted from the king by the holy man, Saint François de Paul.

We have no letters to help us reconstruct the gloomy

winter of 1837-1838, which followed Flaubert's sixteenth birthday. On April 20, 1838, he dedicated to Alfred Le Poittevin a series of disconnected reflections called *Agonies: pensées sceptiques.* These pessimistic pages, "the work of a madman," prelude the *Mémoires d'un fou.* According to the boy-author, they reveal "a whole immense abyss of skepticism and despair," in a sort of pseudo-philosophic confession begun two years before. The date is to be noted in the light of his love at Trouville.

In Quinet's pessimistic epic, no less than in Solomon's wisdom, we can find the idea which might serve as epigraph for *Agonies:* "vanity, in my opinion, is the basis of all the actions of men." And the doubts of the author extend even to literary glory, although "he still feels in his heart an inner force visible to no one." Under this windy rhetoric throb the growing pains of a genius, "crushed by incoherent sensations and ideas . . . which analysis cannot describe;" for the nascent artist asks himself: "Shall I be doomed to remain all my life a mute who wants to speak and who foams with rage?"

The personal note here is as plain as the love that set him to philosophizing. Filled with the horrors of his father's dissecting-room, Flaubert next pens two pages on the exhumation of a rotting corpse, subtitled *Angoisses* and ending with the echo from *Hamlet:* "Fool, look at a skull!" A possible suggestion from *Notre-Dame* or Lewis' *Monk* occurs in his sketch of an abandoned cleric, who throws away his crucifix in

order to visit a lupanar. Then comes a visit to a priest who interrupts his confession by crying to his cook: "Be careful of the potatoes!" This adventure parallels Emma Bovary's reception by the Abbé Bournisien.[4]

Next comes a description of a traveller in the deserts of Africa, surrounded by hissing serpents and vainly striving to surmount a rocky obstacle in his path; he falls back exhausted and tigers come and drink his blood. This may well be the story of a real nightmare, but it could only occur to a young artist overwhelmed by the crisis of puberty and all its ambitions. We have next a sentimental page on poverty and misfortune, and another on the disasters that beset a king. Then this would-be panorama of human nothingness ends in the Vision of Sin shown by Satan to the watcher on Mount Athos; Flaubert simply copies his first manuscript, written at the age of thirteen.

All is vanity, although one may have "ambition in one's heart and poetry in one's soul." All is mockery to Flaubert's timid vision of life, except the one un-

[4] Since Flaubert probably made his first communion and knew the confessional at least in childhood, one might think it a real experience of his or at least an anecdote picked up in his Voltairian medical milieu. It seems however a pure fabrication, for the boy had now involved himself in class debates with a divinity student upon the virtue of the clergy; he writes Ernest that he is distinguishing himself by his hatred of priests and is "inventing the coarsest and most absurd of dirty stories about them (*Corr.*, Nov. 30, 1838)." But even then the thing has a symbolic importance; it means a mood similar to Emma Bovary's.

shakable fact, Death. So after *Agonies,* his tortured imagination turns to the fable of the Dance of the Dead (*La danse des morts,* May 18, 1838). In fact, the mediæval legend offers a dynamic horror far beyond the simple notion of the corpse, and the many variants of the fable provide a canvas for his nihilistic pessimism. The first idea of *La danse des morts* very probably came to him from seeing ossuaries—those niches in country churches which are filled with the bones unearthed when new graves are dug in the churchyard. Of course, Saint Maclou at Rouen still has a border or frieze containing several emblematic subjects of mortality; the Dance of Death is mentioned in Barante's *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne;* it is the subject of the Bibliophile Jacob's *La danse macabre* and Peignot's *Recherches sur les danses des morts* (1826); all the Romanticists knew the series of woodcuts attributed to Holbein, wherein the legend attained its definite plastic expression. These woodcuts, which inspired the Preface of George Sand's *La mare au diable,* certainly suggested many details of Flaubert's lyrical version. The Romantic school had loved to personify Death ever since the first translations of Bürger's ballad *Lénore;* the idea was in the air. Gautier had already published parts of *La Comédie de la mort,* and as Flaubert used his *Albertus* in Chapter IV, he may have read the whole poem, which appeared in February, 1838 (Coleman, 7, n. 1). Like Lord Byron and his hero *Lara* (I, ix), Flaubert kept a skull on his desk (*Corr.,* II, 208), and he will put one on the

prie-Dieu in the studio of the artist Pellerin (*Education sentimentale,* 53).

In his vision the old Faust-idea of a temptation furnishes the motive. Satan renews with Christ the debate begun upon the Mount of Olives; and to show Him that His triumph is vanity, he reveals a huge cosmic vision. The corruption of Earth is proven by the spectacle of Alexander the Great sunk in debauch; then the tempter and his victim begin a mad course through the heavens on a shooting star. They meet a throng of souls on their endless journey to Heaven; they hear the choir of the Elect; and they return to earth, in a country churchyard filled with flowers and silvered by the moonlight. There is a moment of elegiac poetry, but the neighing of horses nearby opens a vision of war, a plain all white with human bones and lighted by the flames of burning cities.

Then, as in Quinet's *Ahasvérus* (258 ff.), the tombs open and give up their dead. Satan summons a chorus of young girls, he invokes nations, kings, men and women long since gone from earth; Death is seen on his Pale Horse, intoning a lyrical monody worthy of Bürger and prophetic of the monologue in *La tentation de saint Antoine.* "But I must begin again, resume my everlasting course through worlds and space; 'tis I who pass by carrying off creeds and glory, loves and crimes, all things. . . . O God, when shall I sleep in my turn? when wilt thou cease to create? when can I fall asleep on my tombs like a digger of graves? . . . and set my courser free . . . to trample the dust of

crumbled empires? . . . For thou, too, perhaps"—he tells his courser—"weary as I am, seeking an abyss wherein to cast thyself, wilt sink breathless from thy race beside the ocean of the infinite;[5] and with foaming mouth and neck and nostrils stretched out toward the horizon, thou wilt implore as I do an eternal slumber. . . . Thou wilt ask to join the hushed storm-wind, the faded flower, the rotted corpse; thou wilt ask for sleep, for eternity is torment and nothingness devours."

We think of Schopenhauer's pessimism as we read this dithyramb, but the actual echoes come most often from Quinet. Flaubert also does not forget his Byron; for now he makes Death cry, like Cain: "Satan, I love thee!"

Satan would console the Reaper by reminding him of his dreadful power; he, too, eager to devour the world in his burning bosom, cries out for the trumpet of the Lord. Then Death in his shroud rises to his gruesome height, holds out his bony arms over the boundless red plain and evokes the skeletons of the dead (Cf. *Ahasvérus,* 258). First come the kings: Alexander calls for his armies and makes plans to conquer the world again. The Reaper thrusts him back into the tomb; then Nero, dreaming of love and pleasure mingled with blood; next, the aged Pope; then the courtesans; then a pair of lovers still dreaming of love in their grave.

[5] Cf. *Ahasvérus*, 357: "pour en finir je voudrais me noyer dans cette mer d'infini que je n'ai jamais vue." Here, too, Death's steed (121) shares his master's desire (171).

The last scene is even more definitely a transcript of the author's personal feelings, for it repeats the exotic longings of Mazza in *Passion et vertu* and the pessimism already set forth in the *Mémoires d'un fou.* The poet alone is left in the world; he sits dreaming of the verses he has renounced as too trifling, of the limitless voyages and reveries by which he will replace them in his stripped and empty heart; he yields to his ocean of despair. Flower by flower he has robbed his soul of fragrance, now "he can only weep at the sunset (463), to see the paling sky and the return of autumn clad in winter's shroud." And the poet cries aloud to Death to rid him of his pain; alone in the universe, he feels his soul, which he would fain deny, is stifling him. Then comes History, bearing on her shoulders the marks of Satan's never-ending clutch, and likewise longing for annihilation. But Death only summons his courser, and while the weeping Christ seeks the bosom of his Father, Satan, with a horrible laugh of joy and pride, falls upon the earth and covers it with his wings outspread like a sable shroud.[6]

With Flaubert's dreams, the juvenilia present all his inhibitions. Sated with the empty abysses of metaphysics, our young Romanticist now turns to a longing for the infinite conquered or forgotten in the joys and the oblivion of debauch. From Byron's revels in Newstead Abbey down to Balzac's *La peau de chagrin* and

[6] Cf. the end of *Ahasvérus*, p. 419: "Redescends sur la terre, étreins-la de tes ailes, et couve ton néant pendant l'éternité."

Gautier's *Les jeunes-France* (*Sous la table, Le bol de punch*), the orgy provides the generation of 1830 with a safety-valve for passions impossible of satisfaction: Bacchus offers the egotist of emotion at least a temporary release from desire. The vogue of Rabelais at this time rests in part upon this reaction. Eager to outdo all other Romantic orgies, eager to *épater* Alfred and Ernest with his precocious corruption, Flaubert completed, four weeks after *La danse des morts,* his orgiastic and sanguinary *Ivre et mort.* He based it upon memories of his first actual sacrifice to Bacchus at his brother's wedding, but he exaggerated each symptom of his experience so as to "knock out" his future auditors at school.

He would even have them believe that he frequented the sailors' taverns along the river-front of Rouen. For to any Parisian café he prefers "a simple tavern like this, with its unrestrained joy, its easy manners, its drowsy, flushed heads, coarsely laughing, leaning against the wainscoting, plainly painted in the red of wine-dregs! how I love its warm, grey, odorous air, its ceiling blackened with tobacco smoke, its modest smoking oil-lamps, its benches of worn, red plush, whereon for years so many passions have slaked themselves, so many ardent desires found calm; its mirrors cracked and spotted by flies, its tables of black marble with worm-eaten legs, its stools of grey rushes, and over it all the buzzing of intoxication, a thick, joyous clamour, bare bosoms and muscular hands clutching glasses; thick lips, reddened with wine, delicately kiss-

ing the stem of a beloved pipe!" This is, indeed, a "Sailors' Rest," but probably seen from the sidewalk.

Yet the portrait of the aged Hebe is drawn from life; equally life-like are the portraits of the two peasants who have defied each other in a Bacchic duel to the death; the scene of the bout, a low room with whitewashed walls and a huge fireplace, can be found in many a village around Rouen; it is a picture done in the style of Teniers or Brauwer. Their drunkenness begins with gaiety; little by little wine brings her train of dreams; "the world had fled with its pains and its bitterness," they experience "infinite ecstasies," behold flashes of light and sheaves of fire, sink into a slumber which rocks them gently as a hammock. "To feel that one is quitting life with a smile, that one is being killed with kisses, that one is falling into a delicious sleep and entering the limitless world of the infinite, that is happiness, the desire of everything, vague and confused, the desire of death, the desire of sleep, the desire of dreams . . ."

The dream is personal, and in the ending of the tale is seen the violence of the craving behind it. Flaubert's Romantic truculence out-Herods Balzac, surpasses Janin in his novel *Barnave,* Eugène Sue in *La salamandre,* the Bibliophile Jacob in *Le divorce* or *La danse macabre.* One of the mad drinkers brains the other with a carafe, forcing fiery kirschenwasser down the throat of the dying man; not content with this he pursues him with insults and blows even in his coffin. The moral is evident: Flaubert did not find in wine

the infinite of his craving; his imagination still soared unsatisfied beyond the limits of the real.

Months of silence followed *Ivre et mort*, dated June 15, 1838. The boy's pen came suddenly to a stop, paralysed by the violence of the assault his hopes had made upon reality, crushed among the dream-legions he had enrolled from Romantic literature, to aid him. That summer he returned to Trouville, burning with desire to find Maria there. Again disappointed, he turned in his moral emptiness to a past idealised instead of the days to come, a past which gave him back his divinity. Imagination had wandered too long in a future whose realities had gainsaid his dreams.

So, back from his pilgrimage of love, he wrote the *Mémoires d'un fou*. He had been reading Rabelais and Montaigne that summer, learning from them "to feast Pantagruelistically" and "to view the world as a spectacle and laugh at it," but at Rouen he had a relapse into subjective literature, for in a letter of October 11 he wrote to Ernest that he was half-way through Rousseau's *Confessions*. "It is admirable," his verdict runs, "a real model for a writer (*Voilà la vraie école du style*)." This affirmation, repeated in his next letter (October 29), leaves no doubt as to the inspiration of the *Mémoires d'un fou*, although Descharmes and Professor Coleman have also found in them traces of *René*, *Ahasvérus*, *Werther*, Montaigne and others. Apart from Montaigne's doubt and

René's self-pity, which exerted a real influence on the author, these parallels show rather the family likeness in all Romantic self-portraiture, based upon the banality of all human hearts.

Of course, Flaubert dramatizes his pessimism with a Romantic exaggeration of metaphor. His language, like his life, must conform to the books he has read. He harks back to his earliest memories, like Musset's white blackbird remembering the ode he composed inside his shell. As a child he has loved the joys of the eye, the energy of galloping horses, the colour and animation of holidays, with their troops in uniform, cannon and beating drums. Later he loved to watch the Seine flowing between the trees, to look at the moon flooding his bedchamber with light, to revel in the beauty of a misty spring morning, to lose himself in the contemplation of the unresting sea and its limitless horizon. Though naturally exuberant (j'étais gai et riant), he admits that his childhood was filled with dreams.

But impressionable natures must suffer, too. At school, the over-sensitive young egotist meets a collective egotism which gives him "a deep aversion to humanity," and, ridiculed for his ideas and his unsociability, "tormented by his teachers and laughed at by his comrades," he wanders off alone with a book, "something to set to quivering that young heart virgin of sensations and desirous of them." He reads translations of *Werther, Hamlet, Romeo;* feeds himself "with that harsh poetry of the North which echoes like the sea-waves in the works of Byron," remembers at

the first reading whole pages which he repeats "like a song which has put one under a spell." He loves to declaim the beginning of *The Giaour:* "No breath of air to break the wave," or "Whilom in Albion's isle there dwelt," or the page beginning: "And I have loved thee, Ocean." His imagination is fascinated by the "burning passion" and "profound irony" of Byron, by the power of this northern literature, fresh and unclassical, "this titanic poetry, which makes one giddy and casts one down into the bottomless gulf of the infinite." These books, according to his teachers, "falsified his taste and his heart."

"The fools, to laugh at me . . . lost in all the worlds of poetry, conscious that I was greater than all of them. . . . I saw myself at twenty, young and surrounded with glory; I dreamed of distant voyages in the lands of the south; I could see the Orient and its immense sands, its palaces trodden by camels with their bronze bells; I saw the mares leaping toward the horizon reddened by the sun. . . . I breathed the fragrance of those warm oceans of the south; and then, near me, under a tent, in the shade of a broad-leaved aloes, some brown-skinned woman, with burning glance, clasped me in her arms and spoke to me in the tongue of the houris."[7]

[7] One thinks of Childe Harold (IV, 177):

"Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling place,
With one fair spirit for my minister."

Childe Harold, Lara, The Corsair, perhaps Don Juan—these give us the colours of Flaubert's boyish vision of the Orient: Byron had inspired him from his earliest juvenilia (Cf. Emma Bovary's readings, *Madame Bovary*, 48).

"And then it was glory, too, with its clapping hands, its laurels. . . . It was a brilliantly lighted theatre with jewel-decked women. . . ." He sees himself a successful playwright acclaimed by an enthusiastic audience. Next comes an exotic dream seeking its satisfaction in the past: the writer buries himself in the history of dead nations, marching toward the limitless horizon of Time, evokes a vision of the Crusades, sees the orgies and the splendours of Imperial Rome, covets the pomp and luxury of the emperor Nero. "And when I returned to myself, with staring eyes, they laughed at me."

So, harassed by his school-life and exalted by a debauch of reading, Flaubert develops a nervous irritability which torments him even in his sleep. In the cold and dismal dormitory he dreams that his mother is drowning, while he is chained to the earth and powerless to aid her. Other nightmares visit him: bands of horrible figures, with daggers held in their chattering teeth, open his bed-curtains with bloody fingers; their faces, half-flayed, drip with blood, blood that leaves its stains on everything. Their laughter has the sound of a death-rattle and their fetid odour precedes them. The dissecting-room seems responsible for most of these details, including the dreamer's feeling that he has eaten human flesh; the daggers, carried pirate-fashion, probably came from a melodrama read in the dormitory, while the boy listened to the moaning wind.

For the imprint of books is plain upon the patterns

of his gloom. Echoes of Volney's *Méditations sur les ruines de Palmyre* are evident in Chapter VII, with its vision of war and flame, of crumbling palaces, ruins overgrown with grass, and the last savage survivors of humanity dying without religion or hope, in the forest which will soon cover all. But it is Flaubert's own reaction to a milieu in which he has found no mirror to his egotistic dreams that makes him invoke the annihilation of mankind. He longs for a world wherein Nature shall be freed from man's constraint, a world freed at last from the contamination of the race which has learned how to turn machines and found its God in the gold they produce. A real tragedy of disillusion lies under the gloom of these pages, which in the next chapter revert to memories *à la René,* with rides on foaming steeds, remembered sunsets and running rivers, dreams of the ocean of voyages, of triumphs and future loves, again reflecting *Childe Harold.*

Then, after a description of a château the boy visited near Rouen,[8] comes the story of his first love, Maria, and his amourette with the little English girl. These chapters are followed by a curtly evasive page on his first experience with the other sex. Taunted by school-

[8] We wonder if this is the château where Flaubert spent some months when he was two and a half years old (Corr., I, 370). In any case Flaubert could draw on vivid early memories when he depicted the scene of Emma Bovary's first ball, the Château de la Vaubyessard.

mates and ashamed of his chastity, urged on by the daring that pride gives the imagination, Flaubert now "took in hatred" a woman who "offered herself" to him, probably a servant of the family (Goncourt, I, 313).

His reaction is as significant as his confession to Louise Colet eight years later: "Je ne suis pas fait pour jouir." For now he wonders "if that were really the delight I had dreamed of in the virginity of my young and childish heart." Like the woman in Balzac's *Physiologie du mariage* (*Méditation VI*), he echoes the cry of Romantic desire: "Is that all? beyond this chill pleasure ought there not to be another, more sublime? . . . O Maria! I had gone to drag in the mud the love created by your glances. . . ."

Flaubert's heroine, Mazza, bewails a similar disillusion in *Passion et vertu* of December, 1838, which gives a probable date for this adventure. In any case its consequence in the *Mémoires d'un fou* is to turn his envy back to the days of his innocence, "when the flesh brought no ignoble thought and the perspective of desire revealed vague forms and pleasures created by my heart. No, never can one describe all the mysteries of the virgin soul, all the things it feels, all the worlds it brings forth. . . . To have loved, to have dreamed of heaven, and to chain oneself down with all the heaviness of the flesh. . . . To have dreamed of heaven and to fall into the mire!" At seventeen the real Flaubert is born, the future monk of letters.

So now he reverts in the *Mémoires* to his old dream

of creating the beautiful. "If I have ever felt moments of enthusiasm," Chapter XVIII goes on, "it is to Art that I owe them." Already we may see that his genius is lyric, as one would guess in this Beethoven of French prose. "I know not what magic power music holds," he confesses: "I have mused for weeks on the cadence of a theme or the broad outlines of a majestic chorus; there are sounds that reach my very soul and voices that dissolve me in delight." So he loves the orchestra, the soaring voices of violins, his soul mounts in spirals on the melody like a perfume rising into the sky. The reader has long since noted the natural rhythm of his earliest pages, whether imitative or not: Flaubert is clearly a *mélomane* like Rousseau, and the importance he attached to the harmonics of style was perceptible to everyone who heard him read aloud (Du Camp, II, 139-140).

Partly because of this and partly because he is muddle-headed, sensitive and repressed, he is also attracted by the career of the playwright or actor: all his oft-expressed enthusiasm for the theatre shows his ambition to sway men—and women!—from behind the footlights. Yet one may also sway them less directly by literature. "If amid all the nothingness of earth there is one creed to worship, if there is anything holy, pure and sublime, aught that suits that immoderate desire for the infinite that we call the soul, it is Art. . . . I should like something pure as a perfume, strong as stone and uncapturable as a song, something that contains all and yet none of these

things. Everything in nature seems to me limited, dwarfed, aborted. . . . I should like the infinite in the beautiful and I find nothing but doubt."

The infinite in the beautiful! Here for the first time Flaubert shows that he has read Cousin, whose idea of *"le beau pur"* he accepted in its entirety (*Corr.*, I, 239). In his treatise *Du vrai, du beau et du bien,* Cousin distinguishes from the beauty of the real an ideal beauty, which retreats unceasingly as one approaches it, and whose last term is the infinite. Every work of art, truly beautiful or sublime, he avers, throws the soul into a graceful or severe reverie which lifts it toward the infinite (Boas, *French philosophers of the romantic period,* 225). Cousin, too, notes that the perception of grandeur which is disproportionate to us arouses an indefinable melancholy (*Du vrai, du beau et du bien,* 145).

It were foolish, however, to ascribe too much to books, even in one who read more than any other novelist of the age. After all, Flaubert was just a timid and exuberant schoolboy, isolated by egotism and genius. At first he found Byronic joys to bear him up, being red-blooded and proud. He could despise and soar above humanity, reject all the chains of criticism, see in all things only the reflection of his own soul and the means of its development in a dream sufficient unto itself. But this compensatory reaction of self-esteem must affirm itself in action: in adventure, in battles

athletic or intellectual, in successful struggles with Science or with the Muse. One cannot rest inactive upon the summits of imagination, nor deny the cries of the human will to power, the will to live.

Flaubert wrote; and found in his first uncritical ardour that his pen opened to him "an infinite more immense than the infinite of God." But he was soon forced to find words to express visions now grown inexpressible, cold words to fix aspirations indefinite by their very infinitude. So this mode of escape ended with adolescence by bringing a new deception. "How can one render by words that harmony which rises in the poet's heart? . . . I felt my strength shattering me and a weakness of which I was ashamed, for speech is but a far weak echo of one's thought (Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 265); I cursed my dearest dreams and my silent hours spent upon the frontiers of the universe; I felt something empty and insatiable devouring me."

This is why Flaubert stopped writing and "hurled himself" into the study of philosophy during the summer of 1838. One surmises that his friend Alfred Le Poittevin, like Deslauriers in the final *Education sentimentale,* was already meditating the vast system which he tried to set forth in *Une promenade de Bélial.* Flaubert naturally followed his lead, although his year of philosophy, the last year at school, was not to begin for another fifteen months. To comprehend rather than to create seemed to him his immediate duty, and it might prove a guiding clue through his gloom into the light again.

So he now asks himself the meaning of the words, God, Eternity, Infinity, in which "we are whirled around as by the wind of Death." What is the future of this world when man has ceased to be? the future of the dead in their graves? He seeks the meaning of life, "that torrent fated to lose itself in the shoreless ocean of death. . . . These questions lead to darkness from which we cannot escape. And then comes doubt, the death of the soul."

Being only an adolescent he makes the mistake of taking philosophy seriously. He tries to apply it to actual living; he even drops lyricism for argument. In Chapter XX of the *Mémoires d'un fou* he would set forth "that diversity of opinions, of philosophical systems, creeds and follies" which he has found around him; a boy idealist is bound to seek unity and suffer for not finding it. Here first appears the casuist of *La tentation de saint Antoine,* and the satirist of *Bouvard et Pécuchet* is not far behind him. To young Flaubert man's hope of immortality, his virtue based upon a fancied freedom, his activity, his philanthropy all seem vanities, dismally grotesque. Cursed with a soul eternally thirsting, man is but an atom in a materialistic infinite shackled by a scientific fatalism. The grandeur that Pascal found in him is but the grandeur of the dust.

"Je voudrais le beau dans l'infini et je ne trouve que le doute," cries Flaubert, in this religious crisis of his puberty. Its causes are disappointed love and the influence of an older friend, together with that overflow of Romanticism into philosophy typified by *Faust,*

Ahasvérus, and the mania of the eighteen-thirties for the *conte philosophique.* A touch of Le Poittevin's beloved Spinoza enters into Flaubert's theory of the will, but his nihilism, his desire for the end of humanity, is frequent enough in all the descendants of René and Byron's heroes. When Flaubert finally sought refuge in Montaigne[1], he first felt a gratifying sense of his growth in cynical experience (J'ai tellement pris l'habitude du rire et du scepticisme, Chapter I). "I thought I should find happiness in doubt, fool that I was! In it one rolls in an incommensurable void." For all his beliefs fell from his hands in fragments, like the ardours of Bouvard and Pécuchet.

There are pessimists of seventeen in every generation. But they usually remain inarticulate until maturity brings some mastery of style. Flaubert is, therefore, not abnormal except in his literary precocity. He alone describes his crisis as he is passing through it and while he is suffering from it, which gives the *Mèmoires d'un fou,* an unique documentary value. For however he may have coloured his crisis by his readings, he certainly did suffer; the letters prove it.

One dated September 13, 1838, exhibits the last phase of his disillusion. Flaubert tells Ernest that he has now added Montaigne to his favourite author Rabelais, remarking that Byron and Rabelais are "the only two who have written with the intention of hurting and laughing openly at mankind." This Romantic

[1] "At eighteen I read nothing but him (*Corr.*, II, 393)."

interpretation of Rabelais leads up to the gloomier letter, of November 30, which alludes cynically to Ernest's philosophical optimism. "Try to reach a belief in the purpose of the universe, in morality, in man's duties, in the future life and the Stork of the Universe—try to believe in the probity of cabinet-ministers, the chastity of prostitutes, the goodness of man, the happiness of life and the veracity of all possible falsehoods—then you will be happy. . . ." This precocious disillusion has its part in the lassitude and lack of courage of which Flaubert complains in his long letter of December 26.

In this letter which precedes the final copying of the *Mémoires,* he announces that he is planning a mystery-play: his new skepticism is now to express itself in a symbolic form. "I am analysing myself more deeply," he adds: "myself and others; I am incessantly dissecting, it amuses me; and when I have at last laid bare corruption in something which is thought to be fine, found gangrene in beautiful things, I lift my head and laugh. . . . I've come to hold the firm conviction that vanity is the base of everything."

The exultation here admitted is more than mere boyish bravado. It is the poet's Byronic cry of triumph—the triumph of his will to self-expression, his will to power. The world may batter him with the bludgeon of ugliness, but it cannot silence him, for he can destroy its self-sufficiency with his laughter. At seventeen the analyst of human vanities has revealed what he was far from realising then, his future æsthetic formula.

III

THE ADOLESCENT PESSIMIST

We must pause to make acquaintance with the philosopher-friend who apparently helped to crystallize Flaubert's pessimism after he had failed to find Maria at Trouville when he returned there in 1838. To Alfred Le Poittevin he had already dedicated the fragmentary confession *Agonies,* dated April, 1838; and to him he also inscribed the *Mémoires d'un fou.* They exchanged few letters because both lived at Rouen; but Ernest who received so many was never honoured by a dedication from his comrade.

Adolescence brought young Flaubert nearer to Le Poittevin, whom he had always known. Their mothers had been friends from childhood, having both attended the boarding-school at Honfleur. They were now near neighbours at Rouen. Dr. Flaubert had served as godfather to Alfred, and five years later Alfred's father had held Gustave at the baptismal font. Alfred had a sister born the same year as Gustave—she was destined to be the mother of Guy de Maupassant—and the two shared with Gustave and Caroline Flaubert and Ernest Chevalier the dramatic triumphs on the billiard table at the hospital. Later, the three boys spent together their Sundays and Thursdays (the French school-holiday), smoking endless pipes as they talked of books in front of the fireplace in Gustave's room.

Descharmes gives a full account of Le Poittevin in his Introduction to the latter's *Une promenade de Bélial.* He says that the three friends even met during the summer vacation, at Andelys with Ernest, at Dr. Flaubert's place near Trouville or with Alfred at Fécamp. At Rouen they saw each other almost every day, played together, rowed on the river, swam in Fessard's baths, loitered along the quays or in the cafés; and when in 1838 Ernest followed Alfred to Paris to study law, Gustave advises him to cultivate the acquaintance of Le Poittevin, whom he calls "the best stimulant that I know of except Jamaica rum."

"I had good times with poor Alfred," Flaubert wrote after his friend died (*Corr.,* II, 92). "We lived in a hot-house of the ideal, in which poetry superheated the stupidity of life to a temperature of 70 degrees Réaumur. We travelled far without leaving our chimney-corner, we soared high despite the low ceiling of my room. There are afternoons that I still remember, conversations of six consecutive hours, walks over our hills and days of boredom spent together—and such boredom!—but every one a memory that seems covered with silver-gilt, flaming behind me like a conflagration."

After all Ernest was only a boyhood friend, first preferred because boyhood naturally seeks a coæval quick to respond to everything exuberant; Flaubert's adolescence will demand deeper sympathies. Louis Bouilhet he had met at school in 1835 (Maynial, 26), but he made no intimate of him until after Alfred had

married and passed out of his life. At seventeen Flaubert was bound to find a mentor in his elder Alfred, and an ideal in his maturity.

And, then, Le Poittevin was a poet: he had published five poems in *Le Colibri* during 1836 alone. He was a student of literature and philosophy, infatuated alike with Gœthe and Spinoza. He had the love of impersonality that maturity gives, and the literary purism that Flaubert lacked. All this has its significance, for Le Poittevin's poems show many parallels with Flaubert's ideas.

The very first of these poems is full of Romantic revolt: *Satan* is a meditation on the figure that so fascinated Flaubert ever since his discovery of Byron. *L'Orient* depicts a youth weary of "the black vapours of civilization" and longing for the "Orient magique" of the Bible, with its pyramids, pagodas (!) and hanging gardens. *"Angoisses,"* the subtitle of the larger part of *Agonies,* is not all that Flaubert may have got from Alfred's *Heure d'angoisse,* where we find the poet crushed by despair and doubt in a world of crumbling faith, skeptical of Providence and immortality. *Ahasvérus* sets forth the Romantic longing for death and thirst for annihilation, and *La foi* the poet's regret for his lost faith. Except *Satan,* all these appeared in *Le Colibri* during 1836, when Alfred was twenty.

In 1837 this journal published *Le Tasse,* fragments which suggest the dark Byronic hero of *Mémoires d'un fou:*

O malheur! avoir vu les choses de la terre,
Avoir vécu longtemps à tout vent ballotté;
Avoir usé de tout, amour, gloire, misère,
Et de tout maintenant être désenchanté!

This poem may even have given Flaubert the title of his confession, for the meditation continues:

Parmi les insensés, comme un fou, on me lie . . .
Mais ils ont bien raison car je suis insensé! . . .
Eh! ne savais-je pas que tout sur cette terre
Est vain? que tout est faux, et mensonge, et misère! . . .
Nul ne peut mieux que moi, de tout désenchanté,
Dire à son dernier jour: Vanité, vanité! . . .

Here also is the moral of the *Mémoires d'un fou.* But Alfred's cry of *Vanitas vanitatum* is not merely an echo from the Preacher: his already failing health might explain this despair.

"There was a group of us young rascals *en province* some years ago," writes Flaubert in 1851 (*Corr.,* II, 68), "who used to live in a strange world. We would alternate between ideas of insanity and suicide." But without minimizing Flaubert's gloom over his hopeless love and vain study of philosophy, we cannot forget that life is never quite so dark to an adolescent as when he sits down before a sheet of blank paper, indoors. This was especially true in the eighteen-thirties, when paper and ink served chiefly to explain one's feelings.

Flaubert shows his real love of exuberance in a letter to Ernest, January 20, 1839. He complains that

Ernest's letters are too short and too serious. "I want a mass of jokes, of scurrility, of enthusiasm, all mixed up together, without order or style, unsorted, as when we talk and our conversation goes running and prancing, and we get excited and burst out laughing, and our shoulders shake for mirth and we roll on the floor of the cab as we did on a certain day convulsing to recall. . . . Those were the days that will live for me—delightful mornings at Rouen or Déville, spent smoking or chatting. . . . I can still hear our words under the trees, as we lay flat looking at each other, with pipes in our mouths and foreheads perspiring. . . . Or else we're in the chimney-corner. You are there, three feet to my left, near the door. You have the tongs in your hands and you keep picking at my fireplace. . . ." This is a good instance of the sentimental warmth that sharpens Flaubert's memories.

"Weren't we merry in those days and we used to think we were sad!"—Flaubert will admit, April 28, 1847. In fact, their mirth went so far that when Ernest became Procureur impérial and Chevalier of the Legion of Honour (Mignot, 127), he removed from his files the letters in which his correspondent had put too much *esprit gaulois*. For this reason, too, we lack some phrases of the correspondence of Gustave and Alfred (Descharmes, *A. Le Poittevin,* xxii).

But of the letters to Ernest enough remain to show the boys' Gargantuan humour. When a hated monitor was caught in a temple of Venus, Flaubert comments on this "good joke" with shaking sides (*Corr.*, I, 23).

"There's a thing that cheers and refreshes and delights me, it's a tonic for my lungs and stomach and heart and insides and bowels and diaphragm and the rest. When I think of the phiz of the monitor caught *in flagrante delicto,* I yell, I laugh, I drink, I sing hah! hah! hah! I burst out laughing like the Garçon, I pound on the table, pull out my hair and roll on the floor. . . ."

They were merry or they would not have created the Garçon, that farcical type of their *Commedia dell' arte,* probably born on the billiard table. The Garçon masked himself with the grimace of caricature in order to satirize every belief held too seriously to suit the mocking Rabelaisian spirit of his inventors: "he demolished Romanticism, materialism and everything by his stupid exaggerations. They gave him a complete personality, with all the manias of a real character, complicated by all sorts of middle-class stupidities. . . .

"The Garçon had gestures of his own, the gestures of an automaton, the staccato strident laugh of some fantastic character, and the physical strength of a giant." Thus we find him portrayed in the *Journal* of the Goncourt brothers (I, 321), to whom Flaubert described the farce they regularly enacted in front of the cathedral of Rouen:

"One of the boys would say: 'Gothic architecture is fine, it's so inspiring!' And immediately the one who took the part of the Garçon would shout, loudly: 'Yes, it is fine, and the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day, too, and the Dragonnades, and the Edict of Nantes, too!'

"The eloquence of the Garçon was especially explosive in a parody of the Famous Criminal Cases which took place on old Flaubert's billiard table in the Hospital. It was there that they delivered the silliest of criminal defenses, funeral orations for persons still living, facetious pleas that would last for three hours. The Garçon had a history of his own, to which each contributed his share: he manufactured poetry, etc., and he finally got to preside over a regular farcical stage." Outdoors, "the Garçon had a noisy laugh of his own, which was a sort of rallying-cry among the troop," adds Flaubert's niece (*Corr.*, V, 36).

The Garçon, "a man of Homeric deeds in the skin of a bagman," only embodies a desire for violent self-expression which is not confined to sanguineo-nervous types like Flaubert. He may be considered an explosion of youthful vitality such as may be found in any group of college boys; many similar farces were enacted at the same time among the Parisian fellow-students of Maxime Du Camp (*Souvenirs littéraires*, I, 73-76). They are a part of youth's effervescence; but we must remark that Flaubert's Garçon was created in boyhood without the aid of Bacchus, and that the novelist was to continue these cries, gestures and parodies until his thirtieth year. In the Orient he learned how to imitate the senile sheikh, the howling dervish and even the cry of camels (*Corr.*, I, 285, 335, 386, 421; II, 47).

In short, the Garçon is only Flaubert's boyish humour, the love of buffoonery that made him cherish

Don Quixote. He is the real father of the Clerk, of Yuk in *Smarh,* and of the novelist's bourgeois-types from Homais to Pécuchet; but to produce them this humour must mate with the disillusioned idealism of adolescence.

The Garçon is the obverse of the idealistic Flaubert we see in the next of the Juvenilia, all of which now, after the author's seventeenth birthday, assume a larger scope and a more personal quality. He completed in January, 1839, a rhetorical school-essay on *Les arts et le commerce.* This plea for an art set free from the shackles of reformers and humanitarians echoes the æstheticism of the Preface to *Les Orientales* and even more of Gautier's prefaces, especially that of *Mademoiselle de Maupin.* For a critical debate naturally arose with the triumph of the bourgeois and the spread of radical theories as to the purpose of art. Flaubert would reply to the utilitarian: "Has not the soul, too, its needs?" He tells the positivist: "Let me listen to Mozart, look at Raphael." Of course, he quotes the trite example of conquered Greece victorious in culture over her conqueror; and he finds in the memory of Carthage, enriched by commerce, "something monstrous and ferocious." "Is not the name of Carthage full of horror and cynicism to us?" he cries, significantly; and one paragraph is almost a foreshadowing of Gautier's poem *L'Art* (*Emaux et camées,* second edition): "Poets are like statues found

among ruins; long forgotten, they are discovered intact amid a nameless dust; all has perished, they alone endure."

A debate, however, implies a doubt. Art for Art's sake needed defence at this time (Cf. Cassagne: *La théorie de l'art pour l'art*). We recall that even Flaubert's faith in its value was shaken when he wrote the last pages of the *Mémoires d'un fou.* Art, too, seemed to him vanity (Chapter XVIII), like all else beneath the sun. Yet the would-be philosopher had not finished this confession before he conceived (*Corr.,* December 26, 1838) the idea of setting forth all his nihilism in a mystery-play, in which he found himself "face to face with the infinite," a conception which left him so crushed that he had "hardly the will to smoke." Perhaps this is why he does not mention it again until March 15, 1839.

Then he sketches to Ernest his scenario,[1] and concludes:

[1] "Satan takes a man (Smar) into the infinite, they both rise to immense heights in the air. Then at discovering so many things, Smar is full of pride. He thinks that all the mysteries of creation and of the infinite are revealed to him, but Satan takes him still higher. Then he is afraid, he trembles, all that abyss seems to be devouring him, he is weak before the void. They come down again to the earth. That is his element, he says that he was made to live there and that everything in nature is subjected to him. Then comes a tempest, the sea is about to swallow him up. Again he confesses his weakness and his nothingness. Satan proceeds to take him among men: 1. The savage sings of his happiness, his wandering life, but suddenly a desire to go toward the city seizes him, he cannot resist it, he sets out. There you have the barbarous races becoming civilised. 2. They go into

"I am composing works that will not get the Montyon prize, and which mothers will not permit their daughters to read; I shall be careful to put that fine sentence into my epigraph."

This idea was given him by Balzac's *Physiologie du mariage,* which was preceded by the warning: "Les dames n'entrent pas ici." The name given by Flaubert to the anchorite tempted by Satan, Smar, which soon took the more Romantic form Smarh, was probably abbreviated from that of the hagiographer Smaragde or

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the city, to the palace of the king, weighed down with pains, a victim of the seven capital sins, to the poor man's house, to homes of the married, into the church deserted by everyone. All the parts of the building assume a voice in order to pity him, from the nave to the flagstones, everything speaks and curses God. Then the church, having become impious, falls in ruins. In all of this there is a character who takes part in all the events and turns them all to farce. He is Yuk, the god of the grotesque. Thus, in the first scene while Satan was corrupting Smar through pride, Yuk was urging a married woman to give herself to every comer indiscriminately. There is laughter along with tears and anguish, mud alongside of blood. So Smar is disgusted with the world, he would like it all to end, but Satan on the contrary is going to make him experience all the passions and all the forms of wretchedness he has seen. He takes him on winged horses to the banks of the Ganges. There, monstrous and fantastic orgies, pleasures as great as I can conceive, but pleasure tires him. So he feels ambition, too. He becomes a poet; with his lost illusions, his despair becomes immense, heaven's cause is about to be lost. Then a woman appears, . . . a woman . . . He loves her, he has regained his beauty, but Satan falls in love with her, too. Each courts her in his own way. Who'll win the victory? Satan, you're thinking? No, Yuk, the grotesque. That woman is Truth and the whole thing ends with a monstrous *accouplement* . . ."

the monk of the same name on whom Charlemagne bestowed the abbacy of Saint-Mihiel; as the latter reformed the monastic orders and occupies a page in Guizot's *Histoire de la civilisation française,* Flaubert in his history classes certainly heard him mentioned. To a young disciple of Hugo nothing could be more Romantic than the Latin masculine form of the name given to the heroine of *Notre-Dame,* the dancing-girl Esmeralda. Smaragdus, reduced to Smar and decked out with an incongruous *h,* also gained something of the horror associated with Nodier's *Smarra,* which he may have read this very year (*Corr.,* I, 54).

But this cosmic vision filled with Romantic titanism is most indebted to *Faust,* Byron and Quinet's *Ahasvérus.* Maxime Du Camp states that Flaubert knew *Ahasvérus* almost by heart in 1843, when he first met him (*Souvenirs littéraires,* I, 168). The other sources are after all subsidiary (Coleman, in *Modern Language Notes,* April, 1925). The spirit of Byron fills all Flaubert's visions of sin, from the *Voyage en enfer,* which is perhaps the first of his compositions and in which we recognize the germinal sketch of this drama. Like Byron's *Cain, Smarh* has the sub-title *An Old Mystery-play,* and it unfolds a temptation and trial in the abyss of space. But this medley of old themes, dominated by *Faust* and including even *Le diable boiteux,* becomes in a boy of seventeen something new and extraordinary: Flaubert lifts his conception, if not his drama, into originality by creating the God of the Grotesque.

Like *Faust* and *Ahasvérus* the drama begins with a Prologue, wherein Satan reveals his intention of proving his power by plunging a saint into the abysses of evil. The first scene is almost identical with the later *Tentation de saint Antoine:* it is evening, in a valley of Asia Minor, in front of a hermit's hut. To the holy man, simple and contented and filled with love, appears Satan in the garb of a Greek doctor of theology. While he is craftily tempting the saint, his companion Yuk is tempting a married woman who has come to consult Smarh. Yuk corrupts her by defining and extenuating her half-conscious desires, until she departs convinced and ready to yield to them. This woman is only a coarser Emma Bovary; and their conversation, which continues along with the theological discussion, shows already that grotesque contrast or ironic parallel which Flaubert will use in Rodolphe's courtship of Emma, interrupted by the sordid cries of the country fair.

Then Satan disappears and after him his companion. As night falls the saint is already racked by desires and curiosity; he recalls his innocent past (Flaubert's past) and wonders at the change in himself. Satan returns and they set out together to find true knowledge, soaring through infinite space and leaving the dwindling earth far behind. Smarh is first filled with pride and joy, but soon weakening before the immensity, and crushed by the infinite and by the fatality that rules all things, he comes to feel only the void devouring his soul within him. Knowledge is but doubt, falsehood and vanity; Smarh trembles as they

mount still higher and begs to descend to earth again.

They descend, and find themselves beside the ocean whose infinite was the background (*Corr.*, I, 28) of Flaubert's crisis. Smarh's pride returns upon his natal earth, until he is almost swept away by a huge wave from the tempest-stricken sea. As in the abyss of space, Satan continues to prove the nothingness of all things; and when Smarh insists upon being shown the world of men, the Tempter summons Yuk, that life may be explained to him by the God of the Grotesque.

First they visit the savage in the forest, happy with his children and his lovely mate Haïta, fair as Lamartine's Daïdha in *La chute d'un ange,* but powerless to banish her lord's René-like ennui or his exotic desires. Eager as Faust to follow the sun in its endless course, the savage quits his happy wilderness and sets out to explore the corruption of civilization. They all enter a city with Yuk as their Asmodeus, and gaze upon a king whose fevered lusts harry him from excess unto excess till he dies. "Come, Yuk, these are custards for consumptive readers!" cries Satan, so Flaubert drops his turgid lyricism in order to relate a *Petite comédie bourgeoise.*

This intermezzo, whose indicated source is Balzac's *Physiologie du mariage,* tells the story of a conventional marriage. The little wife's illusions and dreams are the same as Emma Bovary's; and the final scene reveals her adultery amid the wild laughter of Yuk. Then Satan tempts a poor man to kill Yuk and steal

his purse; but the scatheless God of the Grotesque at once springs to life again, and the poor man is hurried off by the police.

They enter a church just as a dissolute priest is leaving it to hasten to his concubine; all the stones of the sacred pile lament the decay of the faith that reared them;[2] then at Satan's word this shell of a dead religion crumbles into fragments, and the echoes of Yuk's merriment drown even the laughter of the "philosophes." Smarh now finds himself in a desert plain covered deep with ashes, where Satan at last reveals his identity.

The hermit is filled with doubts and desires, but will not yield. He cries: "I still feel the need of living." So they mount upon winged steeds, which carry them like a whirlwind through all the empires of the earth, and finally halt in a village cemetery. The windows of the little church near by come to life, their figures step down,[3] and Smarh beholds Christ in the wilderness, tempted by Satan, while the tombs open and the winged coursers devour the bodies within. A rain of blood begins to fall, and Yuk is seen convulsed with laughter, hanging like Quasimodo upon a long cord let down from heaven and reaching into hell.

[2] The cathedral in *Ahasvérus* also speaks (251). This personification is but a development of the predominant rôle given to Notre Dame in Hugo's novel—an idea he took from Anne Radcliffe. In *Ahasvérus* the church also falls into ruins (315-316).

[3] Suggested by long and painful hours in church! The church windows at Caudebec in 1846 gave Flaubert his story of *Saint Julien l'Hospitalier* (Du Camp, I, 237).

The three now resume their journey through an exotic landscape, as luxuriant as any in *La chute d'un ange.* Nude figures of women appear to Smarh to tempt him; and when he pursues them, Satan strikes the earth with his foot and a palace rises up, filled with houris whose beautiful naked forms are mingled with the statues around the walls, as in Lamartine's vision (*La chute d'un ange, 277.* These figures recur in *Le château des cœurs, Tableau* III, end).

Now Smarh is assailed by every form of concupiscence, in an orgy such as might be drawn by a schoolboy dreaming of Nero and Heliogabalus at their feasts. But the poor hermit is filled with bitterness and disgust; he only feels the vanity of desire, while Yuk defiles the banquet and withers the lovely houris with his blighting touch.

Then Smarh longs for power, for the joy of battles. His mad race begins again, and everywhere he carries destruction and death. He fills the earth with dead, but cannot fill his empty breast; and on the borders of a vanquished earth, before the infinite ocean, his lust of conquest cries out for eternity (Cf. *Ahasvérus,* 356-357), because like Alexander he has devoured the world. Death appears, his feet covered with the dust of empires, to ask who dares say if any but *he* is immortal. But Yuk shouts that he alone is eternal, that even Death can snatch nothing from his dominion. And he reveals himself shrieking: "I am reality, I am eternity, I am the power of ridicule, the grotesque, the ugly; I am what is, what has been and what shall be;

I am a whole eternity in myself. . . ." This dithyramb recalls the figure of Eternity at the end of *Ahasvérus.*

The carnage above mentioned is a presage of *Salammbô;* the temptation motif will recur with Saint Anthony as hero; one can even find in the drama enough autobiography to prefigure *L'éducation sentimentale.* For all his past life now appears to Smarh as to a dying man. He sees again his temptations, he feels again his desires and his disgust; he becomes Flaubert to live over the joys of his childhood, and, in particular, his first ecstatic days by the ocean (Cf. *Novembre,* 253). Again he walks near the sea at sunset and imagines a magical presence by his side (Cf. *Mémoires d'un fou,* 539); he longs to be a poet (Cf. *Ahasvérus,* 206), burns with the fierce energies of a Byron; but all thoughts have left him and only objectless passion remains. The genius that seemed to overflow in his breast now appears to him as merely pride, "that life-blood of poets;" under his analysis his heart has fallen to dust within his hands. These ten pages are so personal that Flaubert, like René, must drag into his gulf of despair the very death-agony of the universe. Finally, as the sun is setting for the last time upon the dying earth, an angel appears at Smarh's side, to redeem him, like Rachel in *Ahasvérus.* Satan comes to snatch the angel from his clasp. Then Yuk claims her and contends for her possession; and as Smarh goes rolling into the abyss, the laughing, screaming God of the Grotesque seizes the spirit in triumph and crushes her to death in his everlasting arms.

"It is permissible to write pitiful things," wrote Flaubert on this manuscript a year later, "but not of that temper. . . . You thought that you were a little Gœthe. That is no slight illusion; you must begin by having ideas, and your famous mystery-play is devoid of them. . . ." But even before the drama was finished he had admitted to Ernest (*Corr.,* February 24, 1839) that the play begun two months before was "absurd and lacking in the slightest idea," confessing that all poetry had abandoned him, although he still felt something moving confusedly within.

What was moving within him was the Romantic titanism of the eighteen-thirties. "A strange malady is torturing us unceasingly today," wrote Quinet in his introduction to *Ahasvérus* in 1833, "it is no longer like thine, René, the malady of ruins. . . . It is the torment of the future. . . . What is killing us is not the weakness of our thought; it is sustaining the load of the future in the emptiness of the present. . . . Humanity is secretly tortured in its inner being, as if it were going to bring forth a God."

No better description could be given of the Faust-malady which inspired both Quinet and his young disciple Flaubert, who in *Smarh* reproduced almost the style and rhythm of his model. Quinet had tried to write a French *Faust,* and his hero The Wandering Jew symbolizes humanity in its long march through the ages, amid the fragile realities of earthly glories and creeds. Flaubert, too, makes his hero, man, an incarnation of human pride, curiosity and disillusion

(Descharmes, 117). But to the familiar protagonists, Man, Satan, Death, the young genius adds an absolutely new and original figure in the scatheless and deathless Yuk, personifying the grotesquerie of all things human as compared with the Romantic ideal. In Quinet's drama Eternity alone survives; Flaubert sweeps from the cosmic stage all but the shrieking Yuk, the sole eternity, the sole infinity, the ultimate reality in the death of all things, because even death cannot kill the impossibility of marrying reality and dreams. With this idea Villiers de l'Isle Adam will write his drama *Axël,* and Mr. James Branch Cabell his novel *The cream of the jest.* It matters not that young Flaubert drew from it only an abortion. The memory of that immense conception remained in the soul that created it, destined to find a living form in future novels. Flaubert's work represents the battle between the seraph and the spirit of Yuk.

Hence it is important to seek the source of this weird conception. Des charmes (118, n. 4) finds it in *Ahasvérus;* Yuk's satire is the satire employed by Quinet's personification of death, Mob. Professor Coleman has discovered another germinal influence in Rabelais; we remember that Flaubert was reading the Curé of Meudon in September, 1838 (*Corr.,* I, 28), and that he esteemed Rabelais and Byron as "the only two who have written with the intention of hurting mankind and laughing in men's faces." He even added: "What a tremendous vantage-point is that of a man thus placed before the world!"

Flaubert's bracketing of Rabelais and Byron shows his misinterpretation of the former: to this repressed and adolescent Romanticist even the healthy laughter of *Pantagruel* rings bitter. At the end of October (*Corr.*, I, 31) he is again reading him; his Rabelais is "all stuffed with notes and commentaries." It was these notes that served Flaubert in his essay on *Rabelais* throughout the ages, attributed to 1839 and very probably composed at the same time as *Smarh.* For any later dating is supported only by a reference found in a letter of December 19, 1839. We submit these facts in support of the thesis of Professor Coleman, who goes on to show how the ideas of the drama have their parallel in the essay (*Modern Language Notes,* 1925, p. 213).

"So Rabelais is a Luther in his genre. His sphere is laughter. But he carries it so far, that with this laughter he demolishes fully as many things as the wrath of the good man of Wittenberg. He is the sculptured image of the grotesque. That is as eternal as the world." The essay shows other echoes: in Rabelais' vast epic, "that long, mad race through the world . . . there is eternal laughter . . . the laughter of a giant, that deafens the ears and makes one dizzy;" at his touch "the old Gothic cathedral is all dilapidated, all dirtied and sullied, humanity is stripped of its showy robes . . . it trembles naked beneath the impure breath of the grotesque which has long been clutching it." Rabelais is "real laughter, loud and brutal, the laughter that breaks and smashes," before

his sarcasm pass monks, emperors, popes, nobles and boors; to him "the world was farcical and he turned it into a farce."

Both works were products of the same mood. The seventh paragraph of the essay sets forth a poet's disillusion in an age of doubt, a theme to which the author returns at the end. Under the bourgeois monarchy, material questions are settled, but man must find something "to fill that eternal gaping gulf he has within him." Flaubert, remembering the humour of *Don Quixote,* and having accepted Hugo's glorification of the grotesque in the *Préface de Cromwell* (*Corr.,* I, 34, 40), elaborates a new type of grotesque expressive of his disillusion, and transmogrifies the sane humour of Rabelais in order to create another spirit that denies, an obscene Mephistopheles whose truculence shows the boy's violent reactions at puberty. Professor Coleman is right in suggesting the germinal influence of Rabelais here; he might also have noted that the very name Yuk, with the Romantic Y set aside and the original C restored, is a palingram worthy of Flaubert's master in scurrility!

And, of course, Yuk is the Garçon, the other half of the ultra-Romantic Flaubert, still Byronically shrieking: "Bâtir est beau, mais détruire est sublime!" He is the monster born of the rape of Flaubert's illusions by reality.

Flaubert has dreamed too long, and his paralysed awakening may be traced in the letters of that year

of crisis, 1838 (*Corr.*, November 30), especially in the one written on December 26, quoted in our last chapter. The day after Christmas! Possibly Dr. Flaubert had profited by the holiday in order to speak to his son of the baccalaureate examination he must undergo in a year and a half, and the necessity of soon deciding upon a career.

At any rate this was the dark practical necessity that blackened Flaubert's vista of the future from 1838 until 1844. The question was certainly first brought up at this time, for the January letter shows a great hopelessness over his career and the letter of February 24 a resigned despair. Flaubert has now made his decision or let it be made for him: he announces that he will take his law course, and he offers to wager that he will never print a line. If he does print, if he ever takes an active part in the world, "it will be as a thinker and an agent of demoralization. I shall only tell the truth, but it will be horrible, naked and cruel." Let us remember that he had not yet finished Smarh.

All his castles in Spain are again shattered by this perspective. "The life I had dreamed would be so full of beauty and poetry and liberty and love, will be like the lives of others, monotonous, sensible and stupid; I will take by law course, get admitted to the bar, and then I shall go and end my life with dignity, living in a little country town like Yvetot. . . . Poor fool who had dreamed of glory, love, laurels, travels, the Orient and everything! All the most beautiful things in the world I had modestly allotted to myself in antici-

pation. But thou shalt have like everyone else a life of boredom, and after thy death a tomb and rottenness throughout eternity." Flaubert's almost physical horror of being cabined in an office never left him, for it is the last catastrophe he assigns to the luckless hero of *Le sexe faible,* that play of his last years.

This letter marking his first outbreak of despair is dated February 24, 1839. The middle of March finds the young man in a more hopeful mood, because he is working on *Smarh.* He has received from Ernest a description of Palmyra, probably taken from Volney, whose pages lend the sands of the desert and the dust of dead empires to his mystery-play. Being possibly absorbed in depicting the orgy, he is shocked at Ernest's professed horror for the Pandemians of the pavement, and would allow Alfred to reform him. And with cynical truculence he comes out for the courtesan against the hopelessly Romantic grisette—another piece of braggadoccio like his first dealings with a woman in the *Mémoires d'un fou.* But we do not forget he was reading Balzac's *Physiologie du mariage,* for he quotes in this letter the epigraph he will use.

Smarh was finished in April. The reaction of Flaubert's vitality gave him almost immediately a truer vision of his pessimism. He tells Ernest, April 15, that he ought to bless the God who had given him so favourable a lot. "We create for ourselves imaginary ills (alas! those are the worst of all). . . . We ourselves sow briars upon our pathway. . . . No, I am happy. And why not? what have I to afflict me? the

future will perhaps be black, but let us drink before the storm. . . ."

For Ernest had been complaining. "And you, too," he goes on: "what is the matter with you? Do you know that the young generation now in the schools is awfully stupid; in bygone days they were busy with women, with sword-thrusts and orgies; now they wear cloaks like Byron's, dream of despair and take delight in putting padlocks on their hearts. It is a race to see who will have the palest face, be best able to say: I am *blasé*. *Blasé!* . . . Let's drop all that. Let us be sad in our writings since we have more feeling for that side of things, but let us be gay in our lives, let the cork pop, let the pipe be filled, let the wench disrobe, by Jove! and if, some evening at twilight, some hour of fog or snow, we have the blues, let them come, but not often; from time to time we must dig into our hearts with a bit of suffering to free them from the itch. That's what I advise you to do and what I am striving to put into practice."

The young reader of Rabelais evidently profited by his new philosophy six weeks later, when his brother married. May 31 he writes to Ernest that he is "enveloped" in dinners. "Wednesday Achille treated us to his bachelor's party at Jay's restaurant. The great man Orlowski ordered it in no beggarly fashion. Our table wine was champagne, and the five of us drank seven bottles and one of Madeira and one of Cham-

bertin." There were five days of feasting, but Flaubert, unable to "read, write or think," feels as empty and bored as anyone recovering from such a holiday.

He is tired from preparing term-papers for 1839 and gloomy over his baccalaureate coming the year after. That is why he would consign to the latrine historians, philosophers, commentators and other cobblers, and why he concludes with an apostrophe to the poets who console our gloom; worn out over Montesquieu and Robertson, he naturally finds more truth in "a single scene of Shakespeare or an ode by Horace or Hugo."

As these tasks increase toward the end of the school year, even art and literature seem too remote to console him. "How far it is from the smoky lamp of the study-hall . . . to the splendours of the stage and the burning footlights, the jewelled women applauding those intoxicating triumphs, those joys that are all pride." Hence his bitterness vents itself in praise of the murderer Lacenaire, whose "philosophy" he mockingly contrasts with those of Cousin, Leroux and Brillat-Savarin. "What a lesson he gave to morality . . . that wretched prude . . . how he dragged her through mire and blood. I would rather see men like that, like Nero, like the Marquis de Sade. When you read history, when you see the same wheels always turning on the same roads, in the midst of ruins . . . those figures resemble the statues of Priapus in Egypt, set up beside the statues of the immortals. . . . Those monsters explain history to me. . . . They also are

immortal. Nero will live as long as Vespasian, Satan as long as Christ." And he asks Ernest if he can procure him some of the works of the Marquis de Sade.

Studying history, too, produced a Byronic reaction, for Flaubert's gloom and repressions only waited until the August vacation to find a fiery explosion in the essay *Rome et les Césars.* He had read Suetonius and Juvenal and the historians until "the finest act in Rome's long tragedy" came to life in him, "obsessing him with its memories." In this truculent essay may be read all his boredom and hatred of the present, together with all his aversion to the practical career he has been forced to decide upon. He cries that Pope Alexander VI is but a dwarf beside Tiberius; that ten poets could not create anything that would be like five minutes of Nero's life. This emperor is his hero in all the pageant of Roman history; Flaubert can see him driving his chariot over the bodies of men in the Coliseum, or feasting at his orgies under the light of human torches. He then depicts Tiberius at Capræa, master of the world, but gnawed by a *malaise* such as tortures men's hearts in every society about to perish, feeling happiness escape him and even pleasure slip from his grasp.

We see that Smarh's lust for blood is capable of a personal interpretation: all this giddy debauch of power must naturally move a schoolboy crushed by the perspective of a life in a law-office. So to his mood history is a bloody orgy into which he must enter perforce, a spectacle that intoxicates the while it nause-

ates; he contends that even crime is a pleasure like any other. This sadistic note, no less than the tone of the whole essay, foretells *Salammbô;* and the conclusion "tout craquait donc au cœur du vieux monde" recalls the end of *Smarh* and the end of *Bouvard et Pécuchet.* But we must note that even in this orgy of his fancy Flaubert does feel æsthetically the inferiority of Rome's decline to the age of Virgil and Horace, who by their humanism attain "le point artistique humain par excellence." His head is never completely the victim of his heart.

Howbeit there is very little of Flaubert's head in *Les funérailles du Docteur Mathurin,* offered to Alfred Le Poittevin, August 30, 1839. Possibly Plato gave him the germinal idea of this symposium ending in suicide, but the hero's death is caused by an orgy more than Rabelaisian, although probably suggested by the wedding dinners of the end of June. Thus the story reflects Flaubert's repressions and the vent they found in the orgies of history, and if his heart dictates the ferocity of this story, it marks the climax and the end of the "penny-dreadful" phase in his juvenilia.

A Romantic "shilling-shocker" provides the name of the hero. Despite the spelling, Mathurin derives not from the saint who was patron of the simple-minded, but from the English novelist Maturin, whom Flaubert identified with the child of his imagination, the deathless Melmoth. Dr. Mathurin has the magnetic glance of the Romantic sorcerer, against whose per-

spicacity no affectation avails, a glance which like Baudelaire's in his *Danse macabre,* sees in the gaily dressed ladies of a theatre audience only a mask of grinning skulls (*Corr.,* I, 194). But this perspicacity has been only a blessing to the old scholar, an atheistic saint who has always lived "without passion or virtue," now grown old and infirm and, therefore, ready to end it all.

Romantic poets may seek to die by asphyxiation. Mathurin will not follow them; his wiser choice of a banquet makes him "sublime in his death as Epaminondas, Hannibal or Cato." And Flaubert assures us that he will some day analyse all the wisdom of which this death is the culmination, all the contents of the doctor's many books, "adding an appendix of white paper and exclamation points"—a Shandyan device which is traceable to the two volumes of Nodier he read this summer. Thus Flaubert announces his Symposium as only "the last chapter of a long work which will make me immortal like all of my unpublished works!"

Mathurin has but two disciples to invite to his farewell banquet amid the glories of the dying summer. One suspects that there are memories of Nogent in this page of landscape—a landscape filled with Flaubert's regret for the dancing nymphs of antiquity, in a retreat allowing him to deride the utilitarian world now shut out by the barrier of the long vacation. Instead of a society "prating of virtue" and rich in "nothing great but crime," we have a little company of three

(Gustave, Alfred and Ernest?), content with the fellowship of Horace, Rabelais and Brillat-Savarin, enjoying nature and their wine together. "By sunset the three had already drunk fifteen bottles of Beaune, first quality 1834, and discussed a whole course of theodicy and metaphysics." Like Seneca, Mathurin is resolved to die, but he will die "in a bath of wine," and he will sum up "all his knowledge in that conversation."

With a memory of the bridal feasts one may also see here Flaubert's desire of solving his own problem by a similar euthanasia (*Corr.*, II, 230), enriched by one of those conversations with Alfred in which their imaginations soared so high and so long. He, too, probably often discussed the question of immortality over a bottle of wine, like his hero Frédéric in the definitive *Education sentimentale* (80). In any case the author has pantheistically given himself up to his country environment, since regrets for all the beauty of nature are mingled with the hero's longing to mix his being with the infinite whole. Life is a feast to him, "a feast where the wisest drink slowly and long, enjoying the orgy until they die."

Night falls for Mathurin with a beauty enhanced by the languor of intoxication, whose successive symptoms are set down in precisely noted sensations. The sage grows as incoherent as the drinker in Rabelais' familiar chapter; he mocks confusedly at democracy, morality, our philanthropic and scientific civilisation, education, perfectibility, immortality and the infinite. He laughs at Providence and quotes Brillat-Savarin;

admitting no philosophy of history, he finds in the past only ruins buried beneath the ruins of dead empires, lost in the sands of time. Our nihilistic dying Socrates now begins to shriek like the great god Yuk.

The narrator, too, shrieks in trying to make this last conversation as "monstrous and magnificent" as his conception of it. He can only appeal to the reader from his vision within. "If you had seen them thus, exhausting all things, blighting all things, crushing the savour of the purest pleasures, killing the fragrance of virtue and the blisses of all the heart's ideals. . . . Everything passed before them and was greeted by grotesque laughter and by a grimace that terrified them. . . ." Then comes the death-agony illuminated by the flaming punch; drenched in wine and crying for more, Mathurin drives away the priest by hurling a flagon at his head, gives his final instructions to his friends and dies in peace, after a page of frenzies that recall the horrors of *Ivre et mort.*

His friends wrap him in his wine-soaked sheets and set out, stopping at every tavern along the way to drink and to pour more wine between his lifeless lips. They traverse the city, amid the protests of hypocrites and the acclamations of the mob, while the author japes at the prudery of journalists and the critics' hostility to the new frankness in literature. At daybreak Mathurin's friends bury their master in a coffin made of barrel-staves, digging his grave between a wood and a meadow, near a stream echoing with the songs of fishermen. Then they drink again and break

their last two bottles over his still thirsty clay, leaving the broken fragments on the grave. Thus Mathurin's only monument symbolizes the ruins he had acclaimed.

So many stories ending in ruins can only denote a ruin of Flaubert's hopes. We must let him speak in a letter[4] written during this summer, which shows the blighting of his dreams and the void within his breast. "My life and my heart are equally empty." His essential timidity magnifies through imagination the difficulties of the future: "It is a dismal situation this, when all the roads are open before you, all equally dusty, equally encumbered, and you stand there in doubt, embarrassed over the choice. I dreamed of glory when I was a child, and now I haven't even the pride of mediocrity. . . . After all if you have something to trust in, chimerical or real, isn't it something to trust in, a tiller, a compass, a whole sky to light up your way? I have no longer any conviction nor any enthusiasm nor belief; if I had been properly guided I might have made an excellent actor, I used to feel that power within me, and now I declaim more pitifully than the worst of duffers, because I have laid waste my heart with a lot of fictitious things and drolleries without end; no harvest will grow there now."

[4] Ascribed to 1838 (?) in the Conard edition, page 35. Really written in 1839 because he repeats the phrase of the letter dated July 15: "It will soon be a year since we have seen each other." This was Ernest's first year at the Paris law-school. Another proof is Flaubert's reference to the fact that he has a year more of school to endure.

And he goes on: "As for writing, I have totally given it up, and I am sure that no one will ever see my name in print; I have no longer the power to do it. . . ." Hence he declares he will follow "the beaten track," resign himself to be a "stop-gap," a "respectable man," a notary, lawyer or judge; he will take his law course and submit to fate, although all he desires is "to pass his life in an old ruined castle, beside the sea."

This letter explains the paralysis that seized upon Flaubert's Muse in the latter half of 1839, and the fact that his next work after the brief notice on Rachel, the actress—the hundred-page *Novembre*—will not be finished until the end of 1842. Like Moloch in *Salammbô*, the great god Yuk devoured his nursling projects in their infancy.

IV

FIRST TRAVELS

Flaubert found the school-year of 1839-1840 both lonely and gloomy. September 13 he invited Ernest to come and see him; he cannot read him the "conte bachique" he has just finished and sent to Alfred, but he promises his friend three hours of *Smarh,* "which will be more noisy than agreeable, it is inconceivable nonsense." October 11 he repeats his invitation and begs Ernest to send him his notes on mathematics, physics and philosophy, the first of which he particularly needs. He is worried over his Greek and his philosophy, but is consoling himself by reading Montaigne. "In literature as in the gastronomic art there are certain fruits that you fill your gullet with, so succulent that their juice sinks into your heart. Montaigne is one of the most exquisite of these."

We see by the next letter that Ernest did promise to come in November, and, with Alfred already at Rouen, Flaubert rejoices in the approaching reunion of the "interesting trio," which will distract him from his boredom and disgust with his last year in school. As Ernest has been ill he adds the advice that henceforth he should not abuse his constitution; and the terms of this counsel leave no doubt as to the nature of their distractions in Paris.

The end of the visit plunges Flaubert back into his boredom. He is now a senior, but this honour "so

ardently desired" has turned to ashes. "Alas, as the object of our longings approaches, the pleasure that one had foreseen in its accomplishment decreases, it seems that we are destined to catch nothing but shadows on the wall. . . . We do not catch even them when we run after fleeing clouds." It is mockery to be the first in philosophy; he feels that he is only a clown dressed in a fine paper mantle covered with long insipid phrases (*Corr.*, November 19, 1839).

A month later Flaubert announces to Ernest that he is no longer in school, and that he intends to prepare himself for his baccalaureate examinations at home. He had always hated that life of fixed hours and military discipline; and when in October of the year before he had succeeded in exchanging the lot of a boarding pupil (*Corr.*, October 11, 1838) for that of a day pupil, he had joyously bade good-bye to the dormitories and celebrated the privileges of waiting for his class-hours at the café, smoking his pipe or cigar. Freed now of all school duties, he is ready to confess that he has exaggerated his pessimism; boredom seems, like mountains viewed from afar, apparently impossible to scale until one has scaled it (*Corr.*, December 19, 1839). He begs Ernest for a facetious letter to console his ennui, probably caused by his release from all fixed hours. He needs more than ever his friend's notes on physics, mathematics and philosophy, the receipt of which is acknowledged in a letter dated March 14, 1840. This letter also appeals for a humorous reply.

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Salem, N. C.
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Ernest has left his law studies at Paris for a moment to revel in the pleasures of the carnival; Flaubert at Rouen is consoling himself with the memory of past joys. "I thought again of our fine walks, of so many pipes smoked together, so many pleasant talks, jokes, follies, truths, endless explosions, Rabelaisian mirth, of all our past." The winter had been passed in study unalleviated by any literary composition of importance; it yielded only the four pages of appreciation of the actress Rachel, written the day after her engagement at Rouen and filled with praise of her classical art.

So we see that all in all there were many reasons for Flaubert's gloom during these twelve months preceding his baccalaureate examinations in the summer of 1840. He was not only confined to his study all day, and separated from a comrade who was now too engrossed in work and play at Paris to answer his appealing letters; he was also faced with the abhorrent prospect of life in a law office. This vista loomed nearer and more hateful, and the chill dawn of his faculty of self-criticism showed him no other path. After coldly judging *Smarh*, he felt at times that he could not write at all.

July, 1840, finds him studying hard for his coming ordeal, rising at three o'clock in the morning (*Corr.*, I, 64), working all day long and retiring at half-past eight, so as to take his examinations among the earliest, about the fifth of August. He writes Ernest that he will have to learn Greek (to memorize two cantos of

the Iliad and a modicum of Demosthenes!), to review his philosophy in which he expects to shine, physics, arithmetic and a little geometry—a hard task for a man who was intended by nature to read the Marquis de Sade! A trip through the Pyrenees has been promised him as a reward, but he is embarrassed because the guide offered is less attractive than the journey; "instinct" prompts him to refuse a personally-conducted tour.

The guide he dreaded was an old friend of the family, Dr. Jules Cloquet, the well-known professor of surgery at Paris. He had planned to take his sister to the Pyrenees and Corsica that summer, and so invited the son of his former colleague to join them in their vacation jaunt—a fact which explains the boy's desire to finish early with his ordeal. It was, however, late in August when the party, including the newly-invested bachelor of letters, set out from Paris. They slept the first night in their carriage, and the next day reached the valley of the Loire, which they followed to Tours without stopping even at Blois, where Flaubert would have liked to visit the Château and dream over the life of Henri III and the epic of Rabelais.

This desire may explain a sentence at the beginning of his Journal, printed (in the Conard edition) at the end of the volume containing *Par les champs et par les grèves*. "There are travellers," he observes, "who refuse to give themselves up to everything that comes to them from the external world, grow gloomy and pull down the vizors of their caps and minds so as to

see nothing." This is a natural reaction: the doctor refused to stop at Blois! But even from a carriage window one may see enough to fill six pages before reaching Bordeaux; so the young man decides henceforth to hold "an attitude of compromise, midway between this and the standpoint of the silly souls who decide upon all their emotions in advance." Here as in everything else he will seek "that imaginary geometrical point at the centre . . . of the infinite of human stupidity."

In this mood of calm disillusion he even begins to see the lyrical defects of Romantic travel-writers. He vows to avoid all literary aspirations in his diary: he will strive never "to write with style," unless unconsciously he "use a metaphor for lack of knowing how to express himself literally;" he will "abstain from rhetoric" and "not indulge in the word 'picturesque' more than six times per page." "I want my sentences to smell of the leather of my walking-shoes," he adds: "I want the whole thing to be simple, frank and good-natured, as free and easy as the style of the women hereabouts . . . who wear no corsets but have good figures." His vow to "write the style of a gentleman" shows that he dimly divined the classical realism toward which he was now first headed, and his many lapses in this diary are less important to us than his conception of this ideal.

They passed through Poitiers and Angoulême, where Flaubert notes the gay costumes of the Midi and the

red-roofed houses which make him think of the Spain of his fancy. Bordeaux he finds merely a typical seaport with no accent of its own; "this Rouen of the Midi" evokes no more enthusiasm than the Garonne, a muddy, sluggish river unpleasant to bathe in. But on its waters he sees a canopied boat that would tempt him on a moonlight night; among its reeds he could dream of India and the Ganges laden with corpses torn by vultures. The young traveller has not lost the lyricism he would deny his style, for he would have preferred such an evening to the dinner-party he attended, with its popular songs and vapid criticism of Rossini.

Sight-seeing began on the morrow: Flaubert saw the cemetery where human vanity had piled granite pyramids on inglorious bourgeois; he turned with reverence at the library the leaves Montaigue had annotated, and visited unimpressed the cathedral and the vault in the Tour Saint-Michel, whose exhalations have mummified all the bodies placed therein. This spectacle makes him regret his lack of emotions, but his long realistic picture of the mummies is as self-revealing as his cynical thought that theirs is a celebrity greater than many poets or scholars attain. Cynical, too, is his comment on the Lovers' Lane among the tombs; Yuk seems to be his spiritual cicerone.

The tourists visit the porcelain manufactory belonging to a Mr. Johnston, an incident that perhaps served Flaubert in describing his hero's visit to Arnoux's factory in the final *Education sentimentale* (281). But this was hardly recreative at the time, and when they

set out across the Landes toward Bayonne, Flaubert rejoices from Dax on in the thickening woods and the hills which tell of the mountain ranges soon to flash out upon the horizon. The carriage enters Bayonne by the bridge over the blue waters of the Adour; it is sunset, and the *blasé* young diarist finds that "the enchantment begins." On the bridge they meet a young Spanish girl, carrying her water-jar with the classic grace of a Greek statue. Writing up his diary at the hotel, with his window open on the courtyard filled with singing Méridionaux, Flaubert decides that he loves Bayonne and would like to live there.

During the excursion to Biarritz the boy—who swam like a fish—takes part in a vain attempt to rescue a drowning man. Afterward he walks the beach and greets the sunset by reciting poetry, as he loves to do when alone in the country; it appears that these verses were the bits of Childe Harold quoted in the *Mémoires d'un fou,* since the diarist asserts that he would like to be a muleteer in Spain, adding proudly "for I've seen a muleteer" and even recalling the jingling bells of Byron's description. At Fuentarrabbia he discovers the Spain of the Romantic poets: bits of grey wall or ruins covered with weeds, and over these a ray of sunlight that flashes down the lonely street and reveals a lovely peasant-girl, "an everlasting resurrection of the beauties of nature, rising amid the ruins despite all the deeds of men, ever more beautiful behind the tombs." This lapse into the style of René's disciples is excusable in a boy not yet nineteen.

At Irun he meets another classical nymph, and his impressionability even finds beauty in the worn old servant-maid of the inn. His regrets for Spain follow him back to Bayonne and spoil all the pleasure of his trip to Pau. Spain made real in him a malady of the imagination, a longing derived from books and till then reducible to a violent hatred of Rouen. That is the Gehenna his dream would flee, and having escaped it in space he would now escape in both space and time. "Man is not satisfied to have his past and his future; he wants the past, the past of others, even though destroyed and in ruins. If he could, he would live in three centuries at once, and look at himself in twelve mirrors."

They visit Lourdes, Argelès, Pierrefitte and Cauterets, for the doctor apparently wished to inspect their medicinal springs; and Flaubert, cynically inspired by his practical "partie de plaisir," takes delight in noting the ineptitudes written in the travellers' book at the Lac de Gaube. Then they make a trip from Luz to the Cirque de Gavarnie, which Flaubert declares the finest thing he has yet seen, and returning to Luz he has a long talk with a mule-seller on the joys of life in Spain and the beauty and charm of her women. Small wonder that Emma Bovary and the heroines of the first and second *Education sentimentale* will be brunettes.

September 15 finds them at Bagnères-de-Luchon; they have seen Bagnères-de-Bigorre and Saint-Ber-

trand-de-Comminges, whose lovely Renaissance church is minutely described. But to its beautiful nude sculptures Flaubert prefers the pious cynicism of the Middle Ages, because that gives a more lasting impression. You must leave the church and climb into the mountains if you want the grandiose and the beautiful. There follows a fine description of a trip to Venasque, ending in a panorama that includes all Spain, with even the ocean and America beyond.

But forty pages of note-taking have tired the diarist. Moreover, "when you have described everything you feel, nothing is left within." Notes have their disadvantages, for "the clearness of your mental picture is obscured by the second image projected upon your page." This explains the brevity of the pictures in his Oriental journal ten years later—mere notes intended to evoke memories always deeply etched and clarified by time.

Flaubert's complaints in this journal would also prove that children of Apollo must travel alone. He would have liked to spend two weeks at Fuentarrabbia and omit Pau and all the therapeutic springs; he is bored by having to look at things "interesting or very curious." At Toulouse he asks why he needed to go to Saint-Sernin. "All I could say about it would be only a companion-piece to my notes on Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. . . . But there are things that one can feel only on certain days; to eat you must have a mood for eating." He is bored by the pastoral beauties of the Canal du Midi down which they are sailing:

"When you have gone beyond certain types of ideas and emotions, you hardly look at things beneath you; it is the same for everything, one's beliefs and one's loves." This comes after four pages on the comparative evolution of architecture and literature, which show that the young Romanticist has seized an idea destined to change his style utterly, when four years later he will apply it to himself and paint the converted Romanticist Jules in the first *Education sentimentale.*

"What I should like to bring out clearly is the ascending march of style, the muscle in the sentence, which becomes every day more sharply outlined and tense (p. 391). Thus go on from Retz to Pascal, from Corneille to Molière, the thought gains in precision and the sentence in conciseness and clearness; it lets the idea it contains shine within it like a lamp in a crystal globe, but the light is so pure and so bright that you do not see what covers it. If I am not mistaken, that is the essence of seventeenth-century French prose: the emancipation (*dégagement*) of the form in order to express the idea:[1] metaphysics in art, and, to employ a phrase that is too scholastic, *la substance en tant qu'être.*"

Flaubert asserts that prose undertook to say what sculptured stone had not said—an idea probably in-

[1] Quoted, thus far, by Professor Coleman (*Flaubert's literary development*, 134), who considers that there is no hint of personal application in these pages.

spired by the chapter *Ceci tuera cela* in Hugo's *Notre Dame*. "But now"—he adds—"now that three centuries of letters have refined upon every nuance in man's heart, exhausting every form and speaking with every word . . . now . . . what will be the lyre that men will sing to?' . . . In what fountain of youth will they dip their pens?" Surely this is no less personal than his reaction to realism in the church at Saint-Sernin. For there Flaubert's boredom is swept away, his heart bounds with "inconceivable joy," when his cicerone tells him that the vellum of the missals had been used to make cartridges. "In that one thing I came upon something of our life, of my life, of brutal wrath, a passion that we can at least understand. . . ."

They arrived at Marseilles, September 29, having seen Castelnaudary, the sluices of Saint-Ferréol, Carcassonne, Narbonne, Nîmes, the Pont du Gard and Arles. "You cannot imagine what the Roman monuments are," writes Gustave to his sister (*Corr.*, I, 66), "nor the pleasure which the sight of the Roman amphitheatre gave me."

For after viewing Spain and the Pyrenees largely through the eyes of Gautier and Byron, he came to seek in Provence what he had brought to it from the literature of Rome. At Nîmes he finds in the noisy Provençaux a resemblance to the freedmen, barbers, valets and *souteneurs* of Plautus; at Carcassonne he is disappointed not to see a Roman soldier or bowman

on the ancient parapets, and he rejoices over the two days he has lived at Nîmes and Arles, "en pleine antiquité." Returning to Nîmes from a trip to the Pont du Gard, he visits the amphitheatre at sunset, and his Romantic vision shows him a Roman holiday there, with Davus and Phormio, Libertinus and Postumus, Hippia and the consul talking together on the circular benches, while the ephebe Gito prepares in the barber-shop for the night of revelry to follow. At Arles, too, he thinks of Rome, despite the towers added to the arena by Charles Martel; he dreams of the comedies of Plautus once played in the Greek theatre: "the ghost of Latin Comedy is still breathing there." Even the daughter of joy seen in the street (*carnem homini tenentem*) makes him muse regretfully over the ruined lupanar.

Nearly all of his pages have at least a touch of this romantic historical exoticism, despite the many paragraphs of straight realistic description. On the shores of the Mediterranean he imagines himself watching the same blue waves from the sands of Asia Minor. When he sees a Provençal mystery play performed in the motley streets of Old Marseilles he finds a resemblance to Æschylus in the exclamatory dialogue, and discovers a survival of the Atellanæ in another of these dramas beheld at Toulon.

Cosmopolitan Marseilles seems to him what Persia must have been in antiquity and Alexandria in the Middle Ages, a Babel of all the nations; and he muses over those who have left it to return to cabins under

giant palms, or reed huts on the banks of the Ganges. He even pictures the tropical birds in their cages as romantic exiles filled with something of his own longings; and in the little shops he buys a store of exotic souvenirs, Turkish pipes, sandals, agave canes, things that recall the perfumes of the Orient, with its seraglios, its caravans winding across the desert, its moonlight nights on the Bosphorus, its cities buried beneath the sands.

But he has no admiration for the ship of the line inspected at Toulon, nor the porcelain dishes the sailors eat from, nor the captain's cabin with its rugs and arm-chairs; he prefers the crude, worn and tarry old boats of Trouville. He does not admire either the new defences of the port. "I like fortifications only when they are half-destroyed," writes Flaubert: "flags are beautiful only when torn and black with gunpowder." And surely no humanist with any imagination will blame him for such a preference.

From Toulon they took ship to Corsica. When Flaubert is stricken with sea-sickness, he is able to deride his own predicament by thinking of the nausea of Panurge; he tries to imagine that he is smoking under a tree on land and only remembering that other self on the boat, vomiting into a basin. "Or else I would transport myself to my bed at Rouen: in winter I used to awake at that time of night, light my fire and sit down at my study-table. And I would strive to recall everything, squeezing my memory to make it give me back all the details of my life there; again I would see my fireplace, my clock, bed and rug; . . . I would go

to the window and watch the long lines of daylight start out clearly behind the branches of the acacia tree; everyone was quietly sleeping in the house below me, the fire was sending out sparks and my taper making a white circle on the ceiling." It is by such exercises that the writer learns how to re-create life in a vivid page of description: Baudelaire defines Flaubert's evocative magic and his own in his dictum that "Art is a mnemotechny of the beautiful."

They landed at Ajaccio October 5, for the next day Gustave wrote his sister his first impressions. The prefect entertained them, arranging their itinerary so that they could reach Bastia on October 16; and Flaubert proudly announces that in their trip through the maquis they are to have for guide "a friend of his," a gendarme who had once been a bandit! He has, of course, read *Colomba,* and is planning to meet the Corsican woman who inspired the story, now old and bent and shrunken.

And turning back from the letters to the diary we note that here in Corsica Flaubert, when not obsessed by sympathy for the bandits or by a desire to find in the Corsican shepherd the character-type of the shepherd of ancient Latium, proves that he can write paragraphs of good unsentimental realism; this is because in Corsica there are fewer historical memories to sentimentalize over than in Provence! He can laugh at the fat Norman shopkeeper exiled in Corsica and still regretting the masked balls of Rouen, but he puts

emotion into his Corsican legends, and into his description of the house where Napoleon was born.[2]

The last thirty-eight pages of the journal are full of regrets, because they were written after the return to Rouen. The travellers follow the eastern coast of the island, and Flaubert climbs to a height from which he beholds the distant shores of Italy, across the Tyrrhenian Sea. He meets a real bandit who in the maquis has defied for three years the Corsican police; he even offers his passport to help him escape. This is a more vivid experience than imagining an amphitheatre filled with plebeian types from Plautus; it is finding in life a realisation of Romantic literature such as Flaubert was still seeking, and being a Romanticist the diarist cannot conceal his scorn, a little later, for the young man of Bastia who would become a professor instead of a bandit living in the open.

Sentimental, too, is a paragraph *à la Musset* on the essential sadness of travelling because of its continual partings, in which "one sows everywhere some fragment of one's heart," until habit makes the wanderer cease to look backward and think only of the morrow. Then all his memories are pushed back by new ones, "forgotten for the moment, but soon gathered up in I know not what harmonious synthesis, which now offers you simply a vast sweet mixture of feelings and images to which your memory always turns back with happi-

[2] In *Madame Bovary* (445) Flaubert might seem to remember the horde of neighbours who obsessed Dr. Cloquet for free medical advice (449); but the future novelist could have observed this universal trait in trips made to Norman towns with his father.

ness . . . things made fragrant by an undefinable new perfume which causes you to cherish them in a different way (457)."

This perfume is the fragrance of youth and a first experience of the joys of escape, never to recur in all its fullness. Only in this voyage did Flaubert attain his Romantic desire to mingle dreams and life, books and reality. Back in Rouen he lives again his ride along the sea, thinks again of ancient Aleria buried in the plain like "one of those cities of the Orient . . . that we muse over . . . replacing in them all the dreams of grandeur that humanity has dreamed." Books and the past blind him even to the Romantic quality of the present; the long white line across the sea makes him heedless of the Corsican ballata chanted by his guide, for beyond that low horizon the wind was bringing him, "with the smell of the sea, a sort of memory of things" he had not seen.

So to his eyes this blue Tyrrhenian Sea, so different from the furious green Ocean that he first knew in the North, is the sea acclaimed by Xenophon's soldiers and sung by the poets of antiquity, the sea to whose shores came Aphrodite sleeping in her shell. And Flaubert is filled with regrets and disgust for his lot in the North as he finishes his journal, having now determined to turn the page upon the past which had occupied him for a week. He longs for the public garden at Toulon with its view of the sea, for his brief vision of Arles with its cloisters and lovely Arlésiennes: "there are some things that one must get only a glimpse of." He longs for the palms of the

Midi, evoking to his mind dreams of swaying, gold-decked elephants and dancing bayadères, with incense rising under the palm-fronds and beneath them a seated Brahmin singing the praises of Brahma and the gods. He has certainly spent hours over the colourful lithographs of Burnouf's *L'Inde française* (1835).

Back in Rouen he regrets everything, and he plans for his next summer a great journey through Romantic Spain, through Provence again and thence on to Venice, Rome and Naples. "Some day I shall surely go to Greece, here I am reading Homer . . . and to Constantinople, which I have thought about longer than it would take to go there afoot. . . . I who have so often looked at the moon . . . and mused over Babylon, Niniveh, Persepolis, Palmyra and the camps of Alexander, thinking of marching caravans, camel-bells, of the vast silences and empty red horizons of the desert, shall I not go and slake my thirst for poetry and light, for things nameless and limitless, in that spring toward which all my dreams are climbing?"

"Poor fellow," replies his common sense: "you will spend your summer at Pont-l'Evêque." But hope still makes him wrap and seal the sheets brought back unused, which he puts away carefully labelled: "blank paper for other voyages." Flaubert is now definitely infected with the malady he gives to Madame Bovary (56): "it seemed to her that certain spots on the earth must produce happiness, like a plant peculiar to the soil, which does not grow well elsewhere."

The lyricism in Flaubert's first travel-journal is explicable, for now we know that he did not set down all his emotions in his diary. In 1860 he related to the Goncourt brothers a love-affair omitted in the journal, which had crowned all his desires and filled him with sharp regret by its briefness (Goncourt, I, 313). "He had chanced to put up at a little hotel in Marseilles, where some women from Lima had settled, with a suite of ebony furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl—the wonder of the travellers there. Three women in silk dressing-gowns loose from shoulder to heel, attended by a negro boy in a nankeen livery and Turkish slippers: a company that he caught a glimpse of in a *patio* all full of tropical flowers, with a fountain singing in the midst—was temptingly exotic to a young Norman who until then had travelled only from Normandy to Champagne and from Champagne back to Normandy. And one morning as he came back from a swim in the Mediterranean, meeting at the threshold of his room one of these women, a woman of thirty-five and a magnificent creature, he threw her a kiss, one of those kisses into which you put your very soul. . . . It was a fountain of delight, then tears, then letters, and then it ended.

"Afterward he returned several times to Marseilles, enquired but never succeeded in finding out what had become of those three women. The last time he stopped, when going to Tunis because of his novel *Carthage* (*Salammbô*), he was not able to find the house, which on each of his previous journeys he had

gone to see. He looked and hunted and then he saw that it had become a toy-bazaar, with a barber-shop occupying the second floor. He went up and was shaved, and recognized the wall-paper of the old bedroom still on the wall." This postscript to the affair is confirmed by the *Notes de voyages* (II, 292), and the fact that the correspondence lasted six months by one of Flaubert's letters (*Corr.,* 1926 *edition,* I, 227). Other letters reveal that the place was the Hôtel Richelieu, Rue de la Darse (*Corr.,* I, 119, *et passim*), and corroborate these visits (*Corr.,* I, 150, 153; cf. also *Notes de voyages,* I, 11, 84, 85). The lady is always referred to as Madame F—, except in one letter (*Corr.,* III, 172), where her name is given, Mme. Foucaud; the new edition of the *Correspondance,* however, gives her full name, Foucaud de Lenglade (I, 327), and informs us that she lived in Cayenne.

Six years later and in the first flush of his passion for Louise Colet, Flaubert still remembered this tropical lady-love, who was not so intelligent as he would have wished (*Corr.,* 1926 *edition,* I, 354), with enough affection to write her despite the protests of the intelligent and intellectual Louise.[3]

Naturally no details of this affair are told in the letters, whose disillusion and gloom are partly explicable as the reaction of Flaubert's return to Rouen.

[3] I suspect her Christian name was Emma or Emilia, or Emilie, the name of the heroine of the first *Education sentimentale,* for Flaubert commemorated Mme. Schlésinger's name in the *Mémoires d'un fou, Novembre* and the second *Education sentimentale.*

"I am disgusted to be back in a b—y country where you see no more sunlight than diamonds on pigs' hindquarters," he writes to Ernest on November 14: "to the devil with Normandy and fair France; ah, how I would like to live in Spain, Italy or even Provence. Some day I must go and buy a slave at Constantinople, a Georgian slave. . . . I hate Europe and my country France, my excellent country which I would gladly consign to the Devil now that I have opened the gates of freedom a little. I think I was transplanted by the winds into this land of mud and was born somewhere else, for I have always had memories or sorts of instincts for perfumed shores, for azure seas. I was born to be emperor of Cochin-China, to smoke pipes 36 fathoms long, to have 6,000 wives and 1,400 minions, scimitars to cut off the heads of people whose faces I don't like, Numidian mares and fountains of marble; and I have nothing but immense, insatiable desires, an atrocious ennui and yawnings without end."

The same boredom is found three months later, in a letter dated January 14, 1841. Flaubert grows more gloomy in his revulsion from empty longings for travel and love. He tells Ernest that he is now tired of dreams and projects and of thinking over the future; he is cynically resigned to study law the year after and even to put in four years and get his LL.D. After which he says that possibly he will "go and become a Turk in Turkey or a mule-driver in Spain, or a camel-driver in Egypt."

This expresses Flaubert's mood during the winter

of 1840-1841. Characteristically he was studying by fits and starts the Greek and Latin no longer required of him, and he was probably reading at home for his first year's examination in law, to prepare for which intelligent students did not need to attend all the courses given at Paris. He was separated from Ernest; hence his eager anticipation of the approaching Easter vacation, which he was to spend with his friend in excursions to the Château Gaillard and other near-by sites in Normandy. The memory of this joyous holiday leaves poor Flaubert more melancholy than ever.[4] (*Corr.*, I, 62).

"Ah! dear Ernest," he writes, "I left you with laughter on my lips and wild mirth in my heart. . . . Now I have dropped back into my every-day life, my sterile, commonplace life of hard work. . . .If Alfred weren't coming some day soon I should die of boredom. . . . My happy days give me a thousand wretched ones, joy makes me sadder when it has gone by. . . . While I was returning to Rouen I felt something of my happiness slipping away from me; the sum total of felicity allotted to each of us is small, and when we have spent a little of it we are wholly morose. . . . As I approached Rouen I felt the present—my practical life—clutching me, and with that the daily toil . . . the study-table, the cursed division of my time, the den in which my thought struggles and agonizes. . . . What we must do is not to think of the

[4] This letter, dated April 22, 1840, is clearly to be ascribed to the year 1841, as Descharmes has shown (173, n. 1).

past . . . to look at the future, to lower our heads and rush forward without listening to the plaintive voices of soft memories. . . . One must not look at the gulf, for in its depths there is an ineffable charm attracting you."

In May, however, he had a visit to Paris, where he saw the Collier girls, and at the end of June he tells Ernest that he is starting for the capital in order to prepare the rest of his work on the spot. "The law is killing me," he writes: "when I have spent three hours on the Code, and not understood a thing in all that time, I can go no further . . . and the next day I have to do over what I did the day before (*Corr.*, I, 81)." We must also note, because he will later pour all his satire on this provincial longing, that he looks forward to the thrill of his first steps on the asphalt of the boulevards, to the splendours of Paris with its courtesans garbed in rustling silk, the brilliance of gas-jets reflected in café mirrors along with the gleam of the cutlery on the marble tables. "It is there that prostitution displays itself, that eyes are shining!" Homais would not speak otherwise of Paris than Flaubert now, thinking of the delights of watching these passing women, as he strolls along wrapped in the smoke of his cigar.

It is probable that Flaubert did not go to Paris until July. When he writes his sister, just before his ordeal, his ambition at least is visible in the fact that he is going to bed at three and rising at half-past eight. But he is torn by desires to escape from the "cramming"

of the past six weeks, by memories of vacation days in the country, and he is maddened by the barbarous Latin and French of the Institutes and the Code. "Imagine that since I left you I have not read a single line of French, not one wretched verse, not one decent sentence. . . . For aristocrats like me, accustomed to settle their imaginations in resting-places more ornate, rich and comfortable, that is terribly disagreeable and humiliating." Yet despite all this effort he did fail in his first year examination in August, 1841.

He returned to Rouen, and at the end of August was with his family at Trouville, for his sister needed the seaside to banish the hypochondria that had followed a long attack of illness. And Flaubert indites to Ernest a lyrical letter written on the beach, September 21. "The time is no more when the heavens and the earth used to wed in vast nuptials; in comparison with our gas-jets the sun grows pale and the moon wan, every day some star disappears; yesterday it was God, today it is love, tomorrow it will be Art. In a hundred years or in a year perhaps everything great, everything beautiful will be gone, every poet will have to cut his throat from lack of occupation or go and be a renegade in Turkey!" To this dithyramb *à la Musset* he adds that he has perhaps feasted too heavily; and when Ernest replies gloomily, tells him that the pleasures of the city are at least livelier than the joys of family life. He was destined to stay at Rouen until January, 1842.

But as Ernest did not come home at New Year's,

he, too, became elegiac in his letter of December 31, thinking over the holidays they had spent together in the past, and only relaxing on the last page into a perfect volley of rather forced puns. He joined Ernest at Paris in January, a trip Flaubert made in view of attending certain lectures and nothing more, for he assures his friend that he has not yet opened a law-book and will not do so until April or May. He is so bored that he would like to go and live in Sicily or Naples.

February 24 finds him back at Rouen, but unable to work and looking forward to the fortnight he is to pass at Paris in April. He has dined with Orlowski and two "damsels," one of whom he "is cultivating for her mind and as a study of the human heart. One must get used to seeing in the people around one nothing but books," he observes, "the sensible man studies them, compares them and out of all that makes a synthesis for his own use; for the real artist the world is nothing more than a harpsichord. . . . Good and bad society ought to be studied, the truth is in the whole, let us understand all things and not blame anything (*Corr.*, I, 95)." Clearly Flaubert is now collecting notes for his next work *Novembre*, written during the autumn of that year.

The *Correspondance* shows that he was again at Paris in March. In a letter to his sister he says that he has visited the Collier girls, and is invited to the great annual supper given by the music-publisher Maurice Schlésinger, a memory he will use in both the

first and the second *Education sentimentale.* He evidently would cheer up his sister by reporting a comically stupid bit of conversation with his janitress, and closes with a promise that on his return he will kiss her so soundly that both she and her mother will tell him to desist.

One can see how the great sensitive and exuberant boy missed his family at Paris, how things absent or beloved memories spoiled for him the present. Yet back at Rouen he regrets the capital, for he counsels Ernest to banish his gloom by a régime of gross Rabelaisian indulgence, and to forget in the wild licentious life of a gay young student this age of railways and corruption. It is a pity that not all these letters could be published, for this one (*Corr.,* I, 99-103) reveals young Flaubert almost entire, a youth slightly worried by his coming examinations, but more concerned with the coming of spring and his dreams of summer. "Do you know Henri Heine's epitaph? Here it is: he loved the roses of La Brenta. That might well be mine."

Why, then, he asks, strive so hard to make a fortune and a name? What is the use of all that? "To wear ceremonial black from morn till eve, to possess boots, braces, gloves, books, opinions, to push yourself forward, to get others to push you, to present yourself, truckle and make your way. O my God! Where is my Fuentarrabbian shore with its golden sand, its blue sea, its black houses, where the birds sing in the ruins. . . . Who will give me back the breezes of the Med-

iterranean, for on its shores the heart opens, the myrtle sheds its fragrance and the waves whisper. Hurrah for the sun, for the orange-trees, the palms, the lotus-plants, the little boats with their streamers, the cool pavilions paved with marble, where the walls are redolent of love. Oh! to have a tent made of reeds on the bank of the Ganges! . . .

"But God! shall I never walk with these feet upon the sands of Syria? When the red horizon flames and the dust rises in ardent spirals and the eagles soar across the fiery sky. Shall I never see the spice-scented tombs in which the hyenas yelp, crouching under the mummies of kings, when the evening comes and the camels lie down beside the walls. In those lands the stars are four times the size of ours, the sun is burning hot, the women writhe and leap beneath kisses and embraces. They have bracelets and rings of gold on their hands and feet and wear robes of white gauze."

One can see the very landscape of *La tentation de saint Antoine* in the beginning of this paragraph, so filled with his exotic desires. "Why was I not born a traveller?" he asks his sister in June (*Corr.*, I, 107). "There are on the earth vast oceans and virgin forests, deserts that would tire out a horse's feet, limitless horizons, deep valleys and plains that never end, you can go everywhere through them." But the young disciple of Chateaubriand is now too busy with the law even to think of this. "Only now and then when the sun is setting do I dream that I am suddenly arriv-

ing at Arles, the twilight illumines the amphitheatre and gilds the marble tombs of Les Alyscamps, and I begin my journey over again, travelling on and on, like a leaf driven by the wind."

Only to be where one is not! At Paris in May for a fortnight, Flaubert longs for the merry family table that his sister enjoys; in June he envies her a vacation-trip to see their grandfather at Beautot. "The universe is great and the traveller is its real king." Mortally tired of the law-school, filled with rage at the necessity of taking two courses a day, so homesick that he would give anything in order to hear his sister laugh, he tells her that he makes faces in his mirror and shouts like the Garçon, as if she were there to admire him. Solicitude over his sister's depression probably inspires this exaggerated letter, followed by his return to Rouen to spend the last days of June. Though still worried over the probable result of his ordeal, he proudly tells her not to let his mother solicit anyone in his behalf.

July 3 finds Flaubert at Trouville for a few days' vacation, but three weeks later he is back in Paris definitely until his ordeal, about August 20. And his indignation again explodes in a letter to Ernest (*Corr.*, I, 114; July 22, 1842). "The law is a fine science, and literary above all things. . . . To think that for a month I haven't read a line of poetry, heard a note of music, dreamed three hours in peace, lived a single minute." And again he asks *cui bono?*

"Do I want to become clever, I, to be a great man,

a man known in an *arrondissement,* in a *département,* in three provinces, a thin man, a man with a weak digestion? Have I ambition like bootblacks who aspire to be bootsellers, cabbies eager to become grooms, servants longing to be masters. . . . All that seems to me very dismal, and attracts me as little as a forty-sou dinner or a humanitarian speech. But that is everybody's mania, and were it only to differentiate oneself and not through reasons of taste, through a sense of elegance and not from inclination, it is good nowadays to stay with the majority and leave all that to the riff-raff who are always pushing themselves and who overrun the streets. As for us, let us remain at home, from the height of our balcony let us watch the public pass by, and if at times we are too bored, well, let us spit on their heads, and then quietly continue our chat, and watch the sun setting in the west."

So when vacation really came, at Trouville, Flaubert withdrew to his balcony of art in the lyrical pages of his confession *Novembre.*

V

NOVEMBRE

Novembre was completed at Rouen about six weeks before Flaubert became of age in December, 1842; and so far as we know it represents all he wrote in the two years before he attained his majority. His productivity had varied greatly since the crisis of 1838. The first result of that crisis was the sixty pages of the *Mémoires d'un fou,* and the gloomy year of 1839 had yielded a hundred and sixty pages more. But early in 1840 Flaubert saw that the hundred-odd pages of *Smarh* were a complete failure, and this conviction supported his parents in pushing his unwilling feet toward the law. In the thankless task of preparing for his baccalaureate he wrote nothing during the first eight months of 1840, and even the sub-tropical voyage succeeding the ordeal gave him only a diary of a hundred and thirty-six pages. In the following year, 1841, his muse was equally barren, unless he began *Novembre* during his vacation in October.

Professor Coleman discovers the origin of the title *Novembre* in the poem of that name found in Hugo's *Orientales:*

> Quand Novembre de brume inonde le ciel bleu,
> Que le bois tourbillonne et qu'il neige des feuilles,
> O ma muse! en mon âme alors tu te recueilles,
> Comme un enfant transi qui s'approche du feu. . . .

We may add that the death-desirous hero of Quinet's *Ahasvérus* also cries (308): "Quand viendra pour moi ma saison de Novembre?" in any case the title and the month well symbolized Flaubert's discouraged mood.

"I love the autumn, that melancholy season is suited to our memories." This opening sentence written after a stroll through the leafless woods shows that the work was begun in the autumn of either 1841 or 1842. In the thirty-eighth paragraph an apostrophe to winter (*Oh! le pâle soleil d'hiver!*), introducing a backward view of other winter eves, might date at least the pages that follow, if, as the context shows, the work was interrupted. In that case it was possibly begun in 1841, because the manuscript is dated October 25, 1842 (Cf. Coleman, 22 n. 1, and *Corr.*, 1926 edition, II, 359). The great superiority of its style to that of the travel-journal does not allow us to ascribe these first pages to 1840 or any previous year.

For *Novembre* contains magnificent passages of lyrical description. Everyone must admit with Goncourt (*Journal*, II, 157) that Flaubert might well have signed and published the first pages if the Romantic dialogue had been omitted or revised. Chateaubriand's René might have written this exordium, where the author sits musing in the wan light of sunset, and the whirlwind of memory rolls before his eyes the withered leaves of all his adolescent dreams. The gloom of weary days at school, the visions of his long-awaited twenties, brilliant as the circus-riders who embodied

his first ideal of love, the mad races of his imagination during sleepless hours in the dormitory, because "the puberty of the heart precedes that of the body;"—the dawning sorcery of sex, the ideal mistress vaguely seen as some exotic princess or famous actress speaking the words of the poets he loved (Cf. first *Education sentimentale,* 9), all float before him as they did in those white nights of reverie, especially after a ball or a visit to the theatre. The dreams of the Romanticists have filled his ardent mind with objectless passion; and while his timidity keeps him away from women, he drapes his heart in solitude and strives to put into words the infinity of his desires. In *Novembre* Flaubert expresses the mood of Baudelaire's early verses, because he voices the soul of a literary generation (Cf. Preface to this study). All the ecstasies of a timid, sensuous and imaginative adolescent are fixed forever in the first twelve pages, the finest pages that Chateaubriand ever inspired in a boy of twenty.

Then comes the awakening, the morning when, because life had brought no realisation of his dreams, he awakes stricken with indifference to each and all of them. Feeling now that nothing is worth the trouble of a desire, he begins to see the grotesquerie of everything, even of that passion which made his comrades write love-letters to milliners or grisettes. The coming of this mood was hinted in his *Mémoires d'un fou,* and it attained its fiercest nihilism in *Smarh,* coincident

with the crisis of his puberty. The adolescent now loves to follow the women of the streets, to lose himself in the labyrinth of a great city; he is filled with a vague boredom; and, conscious that he possesses neither René's genius nor Werther's chastity, he sinks into such a disgust for life and literature that his self-analysis breaks off abruptly with the cry: What is the use of writing this? Evidently Flaubert intended to publish *Novembre,* and his realisation that it was unoriginal and over-florid[1] reveals the awakening of the artist in a mind learning painfully the art of self-criticism.

For with this cry the initial inspiration ended and the manuscript was laid aside at least for the moment. Next comes the apostrophe to the pale winter sunlight, "sad as a happy memory;" the author is now watching the burning coal in his fireplace and waiting for the night to fall. He recalls his "fine days" as he did in the letter to Ernest written on the last day of December, 1841, his plans for the future made around the stove at school, an afternoon spent on his back in a field of daisies, possibly the occasion mentioned in the *Mémoires d'un fou,* when he wrote some thirty lines of bad verse to Gertrude Collier. Comparison with these golden hours brings a sense of his present impoverishment of heart and brain.

He attempts to define his vague but fierce desires: "all the passions were entering into me and were

[1] Cf. p. 252: "C'était un homme qui donnait dans le faux, dans l'amphigourique, et qui faisait grand abus d'épithètes."

packed tight there; unable to find egress, they caught fire one from another as from concentric mirrors: modest (*he means timid*), I was full of pride; living in solitude, I dreamed of glory; chaste, I gave myself up in dreams and day-dreams to the wildest concupiscence, the fiercest pleasures. The life I was trampling back within me contracted in my heart and pressed it until it choked me. Sometimes, exhausted, devoured by limitless passions, full of that burning lava which flowed from my soul . . . aspiring to all poetry, every harmony, and crushed by the weight of my heart and my pride, I would fall reduced to nothingness into an abyss of sorrows, the blood would lash my face and my arteries deafen me, my breast seemed bursting, I could see nothing, feel nothing, I was drunk, I was mad; I thought I was great and had within me a supreme incarnation, the revelation of which would set the world to marvelling, and that the pangs it was giving me were the very life of the god I bore within my bosom. To that magnificent god I have sacrificed all the hours of my youth; I had made of myself a temple to enclose something divine, and the temple is left empty, thistles have grown among the stone, the pillars are crumbling, and now the owls build their nests within it. The life I could not exhaust exhausted me. . . . (179)."

A younger heart has caught the René-malady whose cancer devoured the energies of two generations. Flaubert's niece tells us that her uncle could recite whole pages of Chateaubriand; in *Novembre* we have not

merely a general resemblance, but echoes of specific details. Compare with the prologue to *Atala* the paragraph in which Flaubert likens his heart to a forest of India. This page has also echoes from *Ahasvérus,* another book we must add to the list of sources given by Professor Coleman (*Flaubert's literary development,* Chapter II).

Novembre is also related to the author's earlier juvenilia. Like Smarh, Flaubert used to dream of the vast power of kings, to imagine the mad orgies of the ancient world and revel in picturing the splendours of the Orient. He speaks of his facility in those days: "my style flowed from my pen as freely as the blood inside my veins, at the slightest contact with the beautiful a pure melody arose in my heart, my head was full of finished dramas, humanity resounded within me with all its echoing voices; sometimes gigantic thoughts suddenly crossed my mind like those great silent lightning-flashes that reveal a whole city. . . . I was shaken and dazzled, but when I found in the books of others the thoughts and even the expressions I had conceived, I would fall without any transition into a bottomless despair (183-184)." Thus speaks the artist first seen in his cynical criticism of *Smarh.*

Day after day he awoke filled with the hope of some great event (Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 87), day after day he lost courage as the day advanced and merged in twilight. "I saw nothing to cling to, neither society nor solitude, nor poetry nor science, nor skepticism nor religion. . . . I was only a mummy embalmed in my

own sorrow, the fatality which had bent me from my childhood spread out for me over the whole world. . . . It became an atrocious deity, which I worshipped as the Hindoos adore the rolling colossus that passes over their bodies; I took pleasure in my gloom, stopped trying to throw it off, I even enjoyed it with the despairing joy of the sick man who scratches his wound and laughs when his nails drip with blood."

This masochistic note is more than a reflection from Chateaubriand; it is a result of his orgy of the imagination, of the piled-up desires which found no purgation in life's experience. But he echoes the dying Atala and remembers his Volney in describing his nameless rage against life and men and everything. "I would have liked to annihilate the Creation and fall asleep with it in the infinite of nothingness; why could I not awaken among the flames of burning cities! I would have liked to hear the rattling of the bones that crackled in the fire, to cross rivers filled with corpses, to gallop over prostrate nations and crush them with the four iron hooves of my horse, to be Gengiskhan, Tamerlane and Nero. . . ." As such delights were beyond his reach, he wrote in 1838 *Agonies, La danse des morts* and probably the *Mémoires d'un fou,* and conceived the first idea of the drama *Smarh.* Possibly they saved him to achieve *Madame Bovary,* for other victims of the *mal du siècle* were committing suicide (Cf. Maigron, *Le romantisme et les mœurs*), and these included fellow-students of his (Cf. *supra,* 15).

Flaubert was certainly tempted in spite of all his vitality and despite a shrewd mocking vision which at times did not except even his own heart from the edge of his irony. "Then death seemed beautiful to me," he continues. "I have always loved it, as a child I longed for it just to know what it was, to discover what there is in the tomb and what dreams that slumber holds." This is probably the moment of his fascinated explorations of the dissecting-room. "I remember that I often scraped off the verdigris from old pennies to poison myself, tried to swallow pins (!) and approached the dormer-window of an attic so as to throw myself into the street." We recall that Emma Bovary almost yields to the temptation to throw herself from an attic window after she is abandoned by Rodolphe, and that she does poison herself in Homais' garret. The extraordinary vividness of the first of these scenes proves an hour of temptation in Flaubert's youth.

What the boy-author aspires to is not a fairer world after death, but the consciousness of "one's own nothingness . . . just enough life to sense that one is no more." It is the infinity which allures his dreams in *La danse des morts*. And he does not enjoy merely the dizziness he goes to seek on the belfries of churches. "I would look at the points of daggers, the barrels of pistols, put them against my forehead. . . . I would watch the street-rollers revolve in the streets and the vast broad wheels crush the dust on the stones, and think that my head might well be crushed thus,

while the horses walked on. But I would not have liked to be buried, the coffin filled me with terror; I would rather be laid on a bed of dry leaves deep in a wood!" The ending of *Rage et impuissance* reflects Flaubert's horror of being buried alive, and the tomb he gave to Dr. Mathurin, his own desires.

But this memory of Paris is even more significant. "One day I stood for a long time on the Pont Neuf," he confesses. "The Seine was full of ice, great round cakes were slowly floating down the current and breaking to pieces under the arches, the river was greenish; I thought of all those who had come there to make an end of all." He thinks of the suicides lying there beneath and does not dwell on his own temptation because it is an impression too real and too near. But his hero Jules in the first *Education sentimentale* (118) and the autobiographic Frédéric of the second novel of that name (110) both express the temptation which Flaubert probably felt during the winter of 1841-1842, when disillusioned in regard to the life of Paris and crushed by the hated Code.

Similar ideas may occur to any imaginative sentimentalist in his moments of weakness. And Flaubert's sentimentality is plain enough. "Sometimes I felt overcome with affection for my dog," he says, "and I would embrace him ardently; or I would go to my wardrobe to look at some old coat worn at school, and think of the day I first wore it, of the places it had been with me, and I would lose myself in memories of all the days I had lived. . . . For the saddest mem-

ories are still the most pleasurable to us, do they not sum up infinity? One can spend centuries in thinking of a certain hour that will never return, which is past and lost in nothingness forevermore, and which one would give all one's future to live again (189)."

He next relates one of these memories brilliant as torches that make the surrounding darkness blacker. During one vacation at Trouville he had risen at dawn to take a walk along the beach, and had escaped through the silent hamlet into a high mowed field. "I had the sea in front of me; it was everywhere blue; the sun poured over it a wealth of gleaming pearls, furrows of fire stretched out across the waves, between the azure sky and the darker blue ocean the horizon shed its rays and flames, the vault beginning above my head descended behind the waves that arose toward it, describing as it were the circle of a visible infinity. I lay down in a furrow and gazed at the sky, lost in the contemplation of its beauty.

"It was a wheat-field in which I was lying; I heard the quails fluttering around me and alighting on the clods of earth; the sea rippled and murmured more nearly like a sigh than a voice; the very sun seemed to have its musical note, it flooded everything, its rays burned my limbs and the earth sent back its heat to me; I was drowned in its light; I closed my eyes and could still see it. The smell of the waves came up to me with the odour of the seaweed and the marine

plants; sometimes the waves seemed to stop or die away noiselessly on the beach festooned with foam, like lips beneath a silent kiss. Then in the silence between two waves, while the swollen ocean was still, I would listen to the song of the quails a moment, then the sound of the waves began again, then the singing birds."

Sacrilege as it is to interrupt this perfectly noted impression of a quiet August sea at dawn, evidently at ebb-tide and with a land-breeze blowing, one must do so lest the reader fail to note how Flaubert even now employs all the senses to paint his picture. His memories are saturated with fragrance no less than with light and colour, and he reproduces even in the objective descriptions of *Madame Bovary* a certain physical synthesis, absolutely personal, which lifts his so-called realism far above the photographic vision of Théophile Gautier.

"I ran down to the edge of the sea; leaping over the guttered earth with sure foot, I threw back my head with pride, I proudly breathed the fresh breeze, which dried my moist hair; the spirit of God was filling me. . . . I would have liked to be absorbed into the light of the sun, lose myself in that immensity of blue, mingle with the odour that arose from the surface of the waves. . . . I began to walk as if all the happiness of the heavens had entered into my soul. . . . And then I understood the goodness of the Creation. . . . Nature seemed to me beautiful as a complete harmony, which only ecstasy is fitted to compre-

hend; something tender as love and pure as a prayer arose for me from the depth of the horizon. . . . From the sound of the ocean and the sunlight something exquisite was created, which I took possession of as of a heavenly realm, and in it I felt myself living happy and great, like the eagle that looks at the sun and rises in its rays.

"Then everything on earth appeared beautiful to me, I no longer saw anything incongruous or evil in it; I loved everything, even the stones which tired my feet . . . even that unfeeling Nature which I supposed heard me and loved me, and then I thought how sweet it was to sing hymns of praise in the evening, on one's knees, at the foot of a Madonna sitting behind her burning tapers. . . . Then it ended; I remembered that I was living, I came back to myself and started on, conscious that the curse had seized me again (189-191). . . ."

So, like Rousseau's Emile, Flaubert has his hour of mystic ecstasy, of pantheistic oblivion drowning the cares of his groping adolescent ego. A reference at the end of *Novembre* seems to indicate that this occurred the summer he met Marie Schlésinger, during his fifteenth year. But no other moments like this are mentioned, except his dreams, and the force of these dreams is seen in the idealised colouring given to the chief episode of *Novembre*, an adventure with a lady of easy virtue which came to him after he was eigh-

teen. "It was then that I really felt the demon of the flesh running in all my blood," says the author. In such a mood he leaves the town one hot summer afternoon, to seek the shadiest part of the river bank outside the town, whence he returns to the city, "stifled with his desire," crosses the bridges, and obsessed by his imagination of the women he meets, repairs to a house in a little street through which he had often passed to feel his heart beat faster—a little house with closed green shutters, where he enters and climbs the stairs.

So far these are clearly memories of Rouen. One thinks of the final scene in the later *Education sentimentale,* which mentions a visit to a brothel—"the secret obsession of every adolescent"—on the river shore just outside the town, a house recognizable by a jar of goldfish and a pot of mignonette on a window-sill. When the heroine of *Novembre* tells her story, she speaks of the pots of mignonette tended by the girls. The bouquet that Flaubert's later hero Frédéric will carry to the temple of Venus may also be alluded to here in *Novembre,* for the author says: "I have offered bouquets to women I did not know, hoping that love would come to me thereby (232)."

The author of *Novembre* mounts the staircase and opening the door finds himself in a dimly lighted interior such as his descriptive fancy will always revel in, a room glowing dully in the golden rays shed through the yellow window curtains (*Madame Bovary,* 228, 358). There is a bed of mahogany with the same

red curtains that Flaubert will give to the hotel room that shelters the loves of Léon and Emma Bovary (*Madame Bovary,* 366). As he enters a woman in a short-sleeved white gown, sitting against the light from the window, arises with a cry. Flaubert depicts this heroine as a courtesan, but the magic he finds in the word "adultery" points rather to the South American woman whom he met in the hotel at Marseilles, Mme. Foucaud. The frequent mentions of her in his letters (*Corr.,* I, 119, 150, 153, 251, 256, 257, 261, etc.) amply prove the impression made upon him by this *passade.*

We must not, of course, expect a literal narration, for timidity and honour alike required a modification or synthesis of memories so intimate as these. Hence all the details of her portrait correspond with those given to the heroine of the *Mémoires d'un fou,* Maria, except that her dark beauty is enhanced by a *mouche* not due to art, a mole on the left side of her face near her lower lip (203). Flaubert will later add this mole, possessed by Marie Schlésinger but not found in the *Mémoires d'un fou* (Cf. Du Camp: *Souvenirs littéraires,* II, 337), to his description of Mme. Arnoux, but to prevent identification of that heroine with Marie Schlésinger he will put it on her *right* temple! This trait could not be omitted, for Flaubert affirms later (*Notes diverses,* in *Notes de voyages,* II, 361) that the characteristic detail—*la particularité*—"est peut-être seule cause de la passion. Un grain de beauté sur la joue d'une femme est quelque chose de spécial, d'intime, qui fait d'elle un être à part au milieu des autres."[2]

[2] Cf. Stendhal, *De l'amour,* Bk. I, Chapter XVII.

Mme. Foucaud certainly resembled Mme. Schlésinger, or she would not have attracted the ardent adoration described by Goncourt. Flaubert says here: "The type that nearly every man is in search of is perhaps only a memory of a love conceived in heaven or in the earliest days of one's life . . . the second woman we love almost always resembles the first. . . . I knew a friend who, at fifteen, had worshipped a young mother whom he saw suckling her child; for a long time he esteemed only fat figures, the beauty of slender women was hateful to him (236-7)." This friend is, of course, himself, and the woman nursing her baby is Mme. Schlésinger, as we may see from the *Mémoires d'un fou* (Chapter XI).

"In adolescence one loves other women because they are more or less like the first one," Flaubert confesses in the *Notes diverses* cited above. So he will give this heroine the real name of his first love Maria, *Marie*. Like Mme. Foucaud, Marie is a woman of thirty-five, as appears from the two wrinkles on her neck, concealed by her chignon (214), and from the drooping corners of her lips: "Elle n'était plus fraîche même," he admits as he leaves her at the end of their afternoon.

Flaubert finds that his long-desired experience of the flesh leaves him "proud, light-footed, contented and free," but he returns to his room feeling satiated and tired, and going over the afternoon in memory, he

"desires his desire and regrets his joy." Like Mazza in *Passion et vertu* he echoes the Romantic cry: "So that was all there was in love?" In woman, too, he is disillusioned: "Now I did not wish to renounce all the beautiful things I had forged for myself. I had created for myself, beyond my lost chastity, other forms vaguer but more fair, other pleasures less definite but celestial and infinite like the desire I had for them. With the imaginary things that I had built up before, and which I strove to evoke, was mingled the intense memory of my last sensation, and the whole melting together, phantom and body, dream and reality, the woman I had left assumed a synthetic value, in which everything of the past was summed up and from which everything sprang forward toward the future."

Hence our hero returns to Marie that evening, to spend the night with her, an August night (208) fragrant and heavy with an approaching storm. We are no longer in Rouen; surroundings and season fit in with Flaubert's visit to Marseilles in 1840. And we have now other "scènes de nu" more realistic than the first—more realistic even than any in *Mademoiselle de Maupin,* which served Flaubert as model. Not even the fascination of her "abysmal" gaze, "flowing over his heart like a flood"—that magic he will not forget in describing Emma's loves or Frédéric's—is more warmly painted than these pages, ending in his awakening when the dawn leaps out in a yellow line across the sky. He strews her bare bosom with faded violets, and the record of her past left on her fading beauty

makes him eager to know her history. For he "sought in human life the sonorous and vibrant side, the world of great passions and beautiful tears."

Again the creator of Emma Bovary attempts to show us a passionate woman's mind. Marie relates the traditional story of the country girl, precociously developed and very amorous, debauched at sixteen by an old man. But before we have finished the six pages she gives to her childhood we see that Marie is the boy Flaubert in her morbid curiosity of sex and its delights. Furthermore, the picture of her first communion is delineated in such detail that it confirms our guess that Flaubert, too, made his first communion at twelve.

Marie relates her betrayal in very Romantic colours.[3]

As her mad longings reflect that side of Flaubert that desires physical passion in all its ideal intensity, so her disgust at the contact of her aged lover mirrors Flaubert's own reaction to his first experience. Her life of luxury afterward represents Flaubert's sensuous dreams, and her search for the infinite in passion through many successive loves tells of his longings and his fears of disillusion in them. In her aspiration toward the love of a Dionysus or an Apollo, Marie betrays her author's erotic titanism: "I was meant to be

[3] Compare the cynical confession of Rosanette in the final *Education sentimentale* (471 ff.), where the hero's less candid acceptance of the story shows that Flaubert is no longer a boy. "Frédéric was thinking especially of the things she had not told." Yet Frédéric proffers the conventional sympathy: "How you have suffered, poor dear," almost repeating the "Poor woman, how you must have suffered" of *Novembre*.

the mistress of an emperor; I wanted the love of a bandit, on a hard rock, beneath an African sun, I wished for the embraces of serpents (225)." What snake-charmer seen at the Foire Saint Romain so inveigled his fancy that he gave these ardently desired embraces and this love of a bandit to his later heroine, Salammbô?

Marie is like Flaubert in her desire to live in exotic climes (227) and in her desire to bring into passion the sculptor's passion for ideal form. Flaubert, of course, saw the models posing in Pradier's studio. She would dress as a man and go shooting with him, for Flaubert has read *Mademoiselle de Maupin*. She, too, is virgin because life has denied her the pleasure that she has imagined, as to the heroine of Balzac's *Les Chouans*. All Flaubert's desires and all his boredom are hers, so he sees in her a sister to his own soul. "She in her prostitution and I in my chastity had followed the same path, ending at the same abyss (230)." Here first Flaubert employs the *dédoublement* of his personality—the splitting of his self into two rôles—which served him in the first *Education sentimentale*, and which showed him the road to objectivity by imposing upon his imagination the ideal of a generalized and consistent character.

Marie is an autobiographical heroine created by a transposition of sex, like Mazza in *Passion et vertu*. She is thus a prototype of Emma Bovary, for Flaubert said: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi (Descharmes, 103; cf. *Corr.*, 1926 edition, II, 457)." Marie's desires

are Emma's and like hers are fanned by literature. She, too, has read over *Paul et Virginie* a hundred times (*Madame Bovary,* 48), but she has also read *Les crimes des reines.* Marie is a sister of Mademoiselle de Maupin and George Sand's Lélia, full of the mad impossible longings of her creator, who has put the other half of his nature, the half that suffered from his timidity toward women (232), into the autobiographical hero. For in spite of his sentimentality this hero's longings are as sensuous as hers, and his amorous reveries are even provoked by the wax-figures and satin slippers of the shop-windows (232; Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 367; *Education sentimentale,* 97).

Like Gœthe's Mignon, she would flee to a land of yellow flowers and ripe oranges, where they would live by selling the baskets she wove from rushes. But he leaves her eager to escape from this bond: "Was I already in love with her?" His restless imagination is discounting the future again. "There is a moment in our partings when through a prevision of our sadness, the beloved is no longer with us (235)." This reflection Flaubert was to use in relating the parting of Frédéric and Mme. Arnoux in his final *Education sentimentale* (606).

Marie disappears and the hero is unable to find her; Flaubert separated from Mme. Foucaud by all the breadth of France is in the same case as his hero, who was afterward to seek Marie in city streets and to listen to the noise of passing cabs and fancy she had come. Once he imagined her walking beside him in

a grassy field (Frédéric Moreau will have the same hallucination in Paris; Cf. Goncourt, *Journal,* V, 203); "another day, a carriage passed before my eyes and I raised my head, a great white veil came out of the window and fluttered in the wind . . . it writhed, it called me and it disappeared (237)." This detail recurs in *Madame Bovary* (323), in the first *Education sentimentale* and in the drama *Le Candidat* (Flaubert, *Théâtre,* 92). Now if we turn to the end of the opening chapter of *Salammbô,* where the priestess flees from Carthage through one of Flaubert's landscapes in perspective, we see how a youthful impression survives even the pruning shears of classicism. For the enamoured Matho stands gazing spellbound at the fleeing chariot now flashing on the horizon, and the chapter ends with a magic line that hovers over the white page left for illusion: "A long veil was streaming on the wind, behind."

Flaubert loved the figure of a wind-blown veil and used it in *Madame Bovary* to symbolize Emma's desire (123): "Her will, like the veil of a hat . . . fluttered to every wind; there is always some desire that allures, some conventionality that restrains." The desires of Flaubert's hero are driven everywhere, like the leaf of Millevoye's poem. He would like to travel on camels, amid ruined temples, in tropical forests, in India, in "that yellow land called China," in the New World, in Norway and Siberia, amid mountains, glaciers, palanquins and pyramids; he mingles in his vision brigands, rattlesnakes, zebras, kangaroos, mon-

keys, tigers, gazelles, Indian war-canoes. He dreams of doubling the Cape; he would die romantically of pestilence at Constantinople or Calcutta; he repeats the longings of Flaubert's letters (*Corr.*, October 21, 1842) to be a mule-driver in Andalusia, see the Alhambra, be a gondolier in Venice, a coachman on the Riviera or a beggar at Naples; he dreams of finding in Sicily the love of a peasant girl beautiful as "la nymphe antique." At twenty, Flaubert's longings are as confused and conflicting as those he will give to Madame Bovary (51 ff.).

The manuscript is completed in the third person by a friend, as with the story of Werther and other Romantic suicides. But Death does not terminate the list of our hero's desires: he was sorry he was not a musician and would have liked to be a painter, like Frédéric in the final *Education sentimentale.* He detested ugliness, social amusements, the love of kept women, married women and grisettes with frost-bitten hands; he hated philanthropists, commerce, the law, the necessity of being useful and gaining a position in life, the stupid round of Paris gaieties seen as a student of law, his wretched lodgings, the barrel-organs whose music seemed "to tear his heart out," as he sat idle in his room (Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 90). He loves to lose himself in reverie before the paintings in the art-galleries, and having no ambition to work, begins to drink and to smoke opium; he reads badly-written books, although he knows they are bad; he has read many

such and from them acquired a style false, metaphorical and full of adjectives; at last disgusted with these writers, he finds that the masters do not give him the same enthusiasm that they did. He has the ambition to make certain epochs live again in a new light, to link together art and history, to treat the great lyrists in their pictorial aspects, to learn languages so as to travel and decipher inscriptions on obelisks in unknown tongues. After which he laughs at himself and folds his arms again.

In fact, the voice of Yuk with his *vanitas vanitatum* resounds through these thirteen pages which conclude the life of our hero. Finally, failing to find any joy in the Carnival season,[4] he makes a hasty journey to X—— (Trouville[5]), and walking on the beach discovers a broken wine bottle in the nook where he had dreamed of love—just as Emma Bovary in her boat-ride with Léon finds a souvenir of Rodolphe's facile loves. He returns in disillusion to Paris and in a few months dies there, untouched by any disease, by the mere force of his thought, leaving directions for an autopsy, but forbidding the embalming of his body. His death occurs in December, 1841, the month which brought Flaubert to his long-desired twenty-first year.[6]

[4] Cf. *Corr.*, I, 61, for his boyish idea of this festival.

[5] Flaubert was here in 1841 and 1842; Cf. *Corr.*, I, 86, 118.

[6] "Je me voyais jeune, à vingt ans, entouré de gloire . . ." *Mémoires d'un fou*, Chap. III; "Derrière la vingtieme année, il y avait pour moi tout un monde de lumières, de parfums; la vie m'apparaissait de loin avec des splendeurs et des bruits triomphaux . . ." *Novembre*, 164.

Now Flaubert was almost twenty-one; a year (!) had shown him that his dreams of early glory and happiness were vain. And in the final pages of *Novembre* we see, too, the disillusions of Flaubert's student-life at Paris, which he was to resume about the tenth of November, 1842. As a boy he had undoubtedly looked forward to these years at the capital: in the desires of Emma Bovary (80 ff.), who would have liked to live at Paris as well as die a Romantic death, and in the facetious remarks of Homais about Léon's dissipations in the city (168), there is certainly a memory and a parody of his own desire and his own deception.

What Flaubert had found at Paris did not correspond to that boyish vision. Even the intellectual life there seemed to him mere conventional vivacity, which he satirizes later in the set phrases of the two Parisian mannekins in the fairy play, *Le château des cœurs* (5th Tableau). Flaubert was too timid or rather too self-conscious to shine in such conversation, so through pride he always remained a provincial (Zola, *Le roman naturaliste,* 185). Moreover, the Paris of "le high life" is not open to the young law student limited in spending-money and without influential friends. In spite of all the amusements of the capital, Flaubert was so bored in his lodgings that for years afterward he could not visit the street where he had lived (*Corr.,* IV, 324).

These lodgings, in the Rue de l'Est, consisted of a room with a narrow bed, three chairs and a box-divan; they cost him 300 francs a year. He prepared his own

luncheon in his room. In his confessions he speaks of the cafés blazing with light, but he dined ordinarily at a little restaurant on tough beef and sour wine (*Corr.*, November and December, 1842). His meals cost thirty sous; he rapidly dispatched them, warding off all conversation by affecting a gloomy and preoccupied manner (Cf. the final *Education sentimentale*, 34, 350). He tells his sister that he hardly goes out once a week to see the Collier girls, and that he has to give this up in the bad weather of January, because he is too poor to take a cab through the winter mud. Poor as he was, however, these visits probably made him think of marriage in November, 1842, if we interpret rightly one of Le Poittevin's letters (*Annales romantiques*, 1910, p. 134).

He indicates his poverty and his desires even more explicitly in a letter to Ernest written February 10, 1843. "On the other side of the river there are young men with thirty thousand francs a year who have their carriages, the students walk. . . . The young men over there go every evening to the Opéra or the Théâtre des Italiens, they go to parties, they smile at pretty women who would have us put out by their lackeys if we thought of showing ourselves in their houses with our greasy coats, our three-year-old dress suits or our elegant gaiters. . . . They go and dine at the Rocher de Cancale and the Café de Paris, the merry student feasts for 35 sous at Barilhaut's. They have marchionesses or the mistresses of princes to love, the rollicking student *loves* shop-clerks with chapped

hands, for the poor fellow has his passions as well as anyone, but not too often, like me,[7] for instance, because it costs money; and when he has paid his tailor, his bootmaker, his landlord, his bookseller, the Law School, his concierge, the proprietors of his café and his restaurant . . . he hasn't anything left and is crushed with worries."

It will be remembered that in *Novembre* the grisettes' chapped hands are not forgotten. This fits in with another confession of *Novembre:* "He who is enough of a gentleman not to wish for a mistress because he cannot cover her with diamonds and lodge her in a palace, and who is a witness of vulgar loves, he who views with a calm eye the stupid ugliness of those two animals . . . called a lover and his mistress, is not tempted to stoop so low, he forbids himself love as a weakness (239)." This squares with his own statement (*Corr.,* 1926 edition, II, 73) that he made no visit to Paphos between 21 and 24; although on the other hand we have the indications of dissolute living given by Le Poittevin's letters during this period (Cf. *Annales romantiques,* 1910).

Flaubert's disregard for women appears in the portrait painted by Maxime Du Camp, who made his acquaintance in March, 1843. We must quote it entire because it confirms the confessions of *Novembre.*

[7] Cf. Madame Bovary, 47: "il étudiait la médecine et n'avait jamais la bourse assez ronde pour payer la contredanse à quelque petite ouvrière qui fût devenue sa maîtresse." In the definitive *Education sentimentale,* 111, the hero "n'aurait pas voulu d'un tel amour."

"Gustave Flaubert was then twenty-one, and had the beauty of a hero. . . . With his white skin and slightly flushed cheeks, his long, fine, waving hair, his tall stature and broad shoulders, his thick golden-brown beard, his great sea-green eyes sheltered under black eyebrows, his voice resounding as a trumpet, his exaggerated gestures and his ringing laugh, he resembled the young Gaulish chieftains who fought against the Roman legions. I imagine they were like him, impetuous, impatient, dominating and none the less charming. . . . His health, that nothing had altered, permitted him to endure fatigue with impunity; although he spent his nights studying law, of which he understood nothing, ran about all day, dining out and going to the theatre, he was none the less alert in his naturally lymphatic way, mingling pleasure with study, throwing his money out of the window, crying poverty, spending one day fifty francs for his dinner, living the next on a crust of bread and a cake of chocolate, falling in love with some phrase that he would repeat *ad nauseam,* filling all places with his noise, *disdaining the women whom his beauty attracted,* coming to wake me at three o'clock in the morning so as to go and see a moonlight effect on the Seine, lamenting because he could not find good Pont-l'Evêque cheese in Paris, inventing sauces for brill, and eager to slap the cheeks of Gustave Planche who had spoken ill of Victor Hugo (*Souvenirs littéraires,* I, 161-164)." In Paris Flaubert evidently knew to some extent the life of expedients lived by *la Bohême littéraire,* of which we have an idealised picture in Murger's novel (Cf. Martino: *Le roman réaliste sous le Second Empire*).

We can see, despite Du Camp's exaggerations, that the young hermit bent over the Code often became the exuberant boy we knew before his crisis of pessimism. If at Rouen he had gone to masked balls and dined with damsels of the town (*Corr.*, February 24, 1842), at Paris he spent six or seven thousand francs a year despite all his cheap meals (*Corr.*, 1926 edition, I, 242). He paints himself in a letter (March 11, 1843) as one living an easy life, "saying that I'm going to the Law School and not setting my feet in it, smoking a great deal, sleeping very soundly, fond of dining out, especially with people who entertain me well, doing literature and art all day and all night. . . ."

Even without the letters of Le Poittevin, whose extravagances are partly due to a spirit of boyish boastfulness, we see that Flaubert was not always bent over the law-books that made him suffer more than the toothaches he endured in the winter of 1842-1843. He frequented the office of Schlésinger's *Gazette musicale* and the dinners given by his wife (*Corr.*, II, 380, 383); these occasions were to serve him in both the novels entitled *Education sentimentale*. He found a rendezvous of literary and artistic Bohemians in the sculptor Pradier's studio; it was there that he met Victor Hugo, the hero of his youth.

"He's a man like anyone else," he tells his sister; "his face is rather ugly and his outward appearance rather common." But Flaubert's sketch is not a caricature despite its realism. "He speaks very little, seems to be watching himself and to be unwilling to

let go; he is very polite and a bit stiff. I like the sound of his voice very much. I took pleasure in watching him closely; I looked at him with wonder, as at a chest filled with crown jewels and millions, thinking about all that had come out of that man, then seated beside me on a little chair, and fixing my eyes on his right hand which has written so many lovely things. After all there was the man who in all my life had most often thrilled my heart, the one that I perhaps loved best of all those I did not know. The conversation was about punishments, revenges, robbers, etc. It was the great man and myself that talked most. . . . As you see, I go fairly often to the Pradier's, it's a house I'm very fond of, where you aren't under constraint, one that is quite in my style (*Corr.*, I, 127)."

In March, 1843, Flaubert even had enough time to return to his literature and art, as his letter above discloses. The "literature" was probably the first *Education sentimentale,* a long novel in which we shall find many details for this period of his life; the art-studies must be the visits to the Louvre made for the work on the philosophy of art mentioned in *Novembre.*[8] Du Camp, to whom Flaubert read *Novembre* after swearing him to absolute secrecy, states that even then Flaubert had in mind the notion of writing an Oriental tale and a Dictionary of accepted opinions:[9] *i. e.,* a

[8] Cf. also the final *Education sentimentale,* 209, where the autobiographic hero Frédéric decides to write a history of æsthetics.

[9] Mme. Commanville's statement that this novel was conceived in front of the Old Men's Home at Rouen, and in the company of Louis Bouilhet, shows that Flaubert's intimacy with Bouilhet began before the former left Rouen.

collection of all the popular stupidities dear to Flaubert's bourgeois from Homais to Bouvard and Pécuchet: in his final plan it was to form the second volume of this unfinished novel.

As spring comes on his old restlessness returns. He longs for a boat on the Seine, at Andelys; he would like to go to Spain or Italy, or, to avoid the study of law, even to Rouen, "my stupid birthplace," where he could at least swim in Fessard's baths, so much more attractive than the dirty ones at Paris. Writing to his sister in April, he paints a home-sick picture of the family circle around the fireplace, longs for his old room where she used to come at four o'clock in the afternoon to recite her history and English lessons, and where they would talk instead until the dinner-hour. "You have to live in a place a long time in order to make you like it; it's not in one day that you can warm your nest and be comfortable in it." This letter was written in the gloom of twilight, and, of course, his mood is consonant.

June finds him digging hard for his examinations. He has taken too many notes: Du Camp says that he would copy page after page instead of learning facts; now he finds himself overwhelmed by all his papers. To add to this, his toothache has returned and a neighbouring carpenter has taken to filing his saws on the sidewalk opposite Flaubert's room. No wonder that two months before the August examinations he de-

clares himself already "fourbu," and resolves to abandon the law definitively after obtaining his diploma (Cf. Descharmes, 188, n. 5).

It was Du Camp who at Flaubert's request accompanied him to the examination in August: since the night the latter had read *Novembre* to him and they had confided to each other their literary projects, the two had spent most of their days together. Du Camp tells us how Flaubert donned the obligatory academic robe, tucking the collar under his golden beard. "He did not seem confident," he adds. The novelist, too, has given us a glimpse of his ordeal in his second *Education sentimentale* (86-88):

"Then came the month of August, the time of his second examination. In accordance with the usual estimate, a fortnight should have been enough to prepare the subjects assigned. Frédéric, without a doubt of his capabilities, swallowed all together the first four books of the Code of procedure, the first three of the Penal Code, several bits of Criminal Procedure and a part of the Civil Code, with the notes of Monsieur Poncelet. The night before Deslauriers made him go over a review that lasted until morning, and to take advantage of the last quarter of an hour, he continued to quiz him on the sidewalk, as they walked there. . . .

"Frédéric happened to be the last of the series, a bad situation. At the first question on the difference between an agreement and a contract, he mixed up the definitions; and the professor, a good fellow, said: "Don't get excited, sir, recover yourself!" Then, after

giving two easy questions, followed by obscure replies, he went on to the fourth. Frédéric was put out of countenance by this wretched beginning. Deslauriers, opposite, in the audience, signalled to him that all was not yet lost; and at the second question on criminal law, he made a fair answer. But after the third, relative to Sealed Wills, the examiner remaining impassive all the time, his anguish was multiplied. . . . Finally, the moment came when he had to reply to a question about Procedure! . . .

"Frédéric felt a great pain in his head, because he had not slept the night before. A ray of sunlight, coming through the interstices of a Venetian blind, struck him in the face. Standing behind his chair, he rested on one foot and then on the other and pulled his moustache.

" 'I am still waiting for your answer!' went on the man with the gold cap.

"And, as Frédéric's gesture doubtless angered him:

" 'You will not find it in your beard!' "

What Du Camp relates is this: "He had got to the point that he did not understand what they asked him and did not know what he ought to have replied. In spite of his vexation, he bore up under his bad luck and we went to dine together, for that evening he was going back to Rouen where his family was waiting for him."

Flaubert went to Rouen, then to Nogent in September, where he read Ronsard, wrote apostrophes to his pipe and called upon Attila to come and destroy both

Paris and Rouen (*Corr.*, September 2, 1843). He returned to the capital in the autumn to pass the dreaded examinations. But during the Christmas vacation, in Normandy, he suffered his first nervous breakdown. One of the Fates intervened in his behalf, prostrating the 'prentice notary on a sick bed for months of torture, in order to save him for a life of letters.

VI

HIS NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

Maxime Du Camp relates the story of Flaubert's first nervous attack in the *Souvenirs littéraires* (I, 180 ff.), but he assigns to the happening an improbable date:

"In the month of October, 1843, he had gone to Pont-Audemer; his brother Achille went to fetch him home. They set out one evening in a cab, which Gustave himself was driving. The night was dark; in the neighbourhood of Bourg-Achard, just as a teamster was passing at the left of the cab, and as the light of a lonely inn was visible far off on the right, Gustave was stricken and fell. His brother bled him on the spot, hoping with no great confidence that he had just witnessed an occurrence which would not be repeated. Other nervous attacks followed; he had four in the succeeding fortnight. Flaubert's father was in despair, and as he unfortunately belonged to the school of Broussais, he could see no other remedy but excessive bleeding, and he thus increased a nervous predisposition which was already only too threatening. One day when he had just bled Gustave and the blood did not appear in the vein of his arm, he had hot water poured on his hand; in the fright that overcame them they did not notice the water was almost boiling, and gave the poor fellow a burn of the second degree, from which

he suffered cruelly. 'An excess of plethora, too much strength, too much vigour,' Flaubert's father would say, and they forbade the patient *liqueurs,* wine, coffee, juicy meats and tobacco. They stuffed him with valerian, indigo and castoreum. He swallowed the drugs resignedly, ate white meat, ceased to smoke, drank orange-flower tea and used to say with a good-natured smile: 'That's not so good as Sauterne wine.' He had got from his father's library the works that treated of nervous diseases and read them; after these readings he told me: 'I am done for.'

"Many times have I, powerless and stricken with consternation, witnessed these crises, which were fearful. They used to happen in the same way and were preceded by the same phenomena. Suddenly and without any perceptible reason Gustave would lift his head and turn very pale; he had felt the *aura,* that mysterious breath that passes over one's face like the flight of a spirit; his gaze was full of anguish and he would shrug his shoulders with a gesture of touching discouragement. He would say: 'I have a flame in my left eye;' then, after a few seconds: 'I have a flame in my right eye; everything seems to me of a golden colour.' That singular state lasted sometimes for several minutes. At that moment he still visibly expected to get off with a warning; then his face would grow paler yet and take on an expression of despair; he would walk swiftly or run toward his bed, stretch himself out on it, drear and sinister, as if he had lain down alive in a coffin, then cry: 'I have hold of the reins; there comes

the teamster; I hear his bells. Ah! I see the lantern of the inn.' Then he would utter a wail whose piercing note still vibrates in my ears, and the spasm would convulse him. After this paroxysm, in which his whole body quivered, came invariably a deep sleep and a depression lasting several days. . . . During the first three or four years of his malady he lived in a solitude from which it was impossible to tear him."

Thus far we may follow Du Camp's rather malicious[1] story, but the date he gives for the first attack is contradicted by Descharmes in the 1926 edition of the *Correspondance* (I, 147), and by the evidence given in the *Lettres inédites d'Alfred Le Poittevin* (*Annales romantiques,* 1910). For these letters are addressed to Paris again after the month of September, which Flaubert evidently spent at Nogent and Rouen, and the November and December letters contain no allusion to his illness. The letter written December 14 is addressed to Flaubert in his old lodgings at Paris and asks him when his examination comes; this was evidently his "make-up," and the first attack of Flaubert's malady probably occurred during the Christmas vacation.[2] For next comes a letter postmarked May 8, 1844, in which Alfred explains his silence as the result of his friend's lack of frankness on a recent occasion, and asks for details of his condition. This letter is addressed to Tréport.

[1] Why should his brother have "no great confidence" in his cure, considering this was the first attack?

[2] Confirmed by Flaubert (*Corr.*, 1926 edition, III, 331).

The epilepsy by which both Du Camp and Goncourt explain these nervous seizures is only too palpably inspired by their jealousy of a greater genius. Dr. René Dumesnil gives us a physician's diagnosis (*Flaubert, son hérédité, son milieu, sa méthode*): the novelist suffered from hystero-neurasthenia.

He inherited the tendency from both father and mother. To his Norman mother he owed not merely his aristocratic hatred of bourgeois ideals and probably the longing for travel that betrays the Northman, but also his fits of passionate anger; that she possessed the same nervous irritability as her son is seen in the constant fear of offending her that he shows in his letters. And if his father gave him his analytic keenness and tenacious spirit, he also transmitted his quickness to take umbrage and his timidity and pride. The conflict of these inherited traits made another source of nervous tension in Flaubert. This tension was increased by his idealism: "he always lived tormented by the past, allured by the future and unable to resign himself to accepting the present (Du Camp, II, 3)."

Add to this the hospital environment whose stamp is seen in his juvenilia; consider how all his readings increased the fermentation of his passions in a stagnant milieu where the expansive force of adolescence was repressed by provincial conventions. "No man," says Bourget in his *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (I, 106), "was ever more completely in disaccord with his environment and the ideal he dreamed of."

This lack of equilibrium expressed itself in Flaubert's early writings and in his reveries, filled with lust for all the splendours of history and all the passions of the past. But he had to pay for them, as he himself confessed. "My malady of the nerves was the trail (*écume*) of those little intellectual sports. Each attack was like a sort of hemorrhage of nerve force (*innervation*), they were seminal losses of the picture-making faculty of the brain, a hundred thousand images leaping forth at the same time like fireworks. There was an atrocious rending of my soul from my body (I am convinced that I have died several times), but what constitutes the personality, the reason-essence, went on to the end. . . . I was always conscious even when I was no longer able to speak (*Corr.*, II, 311)." The last sentence alone gives the lie to Du Camp's theory of epilepsy.

He was neurasthenic and he did not spare his nerves. At Paris he drank, "with a sort of fury," the full contents of a large carafe of strong coffee per day (*Corr.*, 1926 edition, I, 367); he daily smoked thirty pipes of tobacco (*Corr.*, March 29, 1841). He stuffed himself until he was so fat he could not tie his shoes (*Corr.*, I, 84); and he totally disregarded youth's need of exercise. His pent-up energies overflowed in the violence of the Garçon, derisive of even the things Flaubert loved; and this very faculty of seeing the grotesque in everything, of finding the incongruous detail that destroys the pure emotion is perhaps a result of his nervous tension (Dumesnil, 18), exploding in comicali-

ties endlessly repeated, which he called "henorrrmous" and was alone able to appreciate. One must live long with Flaubert to enjoy fully the humour of his last novel.

But a sense of humour is always valuable to its possessor, as we may see by Flaubert's first letter after his prostration, written in pencil and dated in the new edition of the letters: "end of January or beginning of February." He tells Ernest everything: "I almost went to see Pluto, Rhadamanthus and Minos. I am still in bed with a *séton* on my neck—which is a stiff collar even less yielding than that worn by an officer of the national guard, with many pills, herb-teas, and above all, with that spectre a thousand times worse than all the diseases in the world, called a *diet*. You must know, my dear friend, that I have had a congestion of the brain, that is, a sort of miniature apoplectic attack, accompanied by pains in my nerves which I still have because it is the style. I almost croaked in the arms of my family (where I had come to spend two or three days so as to recover from the horrible scenes I had witnessed at H——'s). They bled me in three places at the same time, and at last I opened my eyes. . . . I am in a knocked-up condition; at the least sensation all my nerves tremble like violin strings, my knees, shoulders and stomach quiver like leaves. C'est là la vie, sic est vita, such is life (*sic*)." But in spite of his diet, the next letter shows him longing furiously for his pipe, whose virtues he had so abused.

Du Camp came to visit him in February and again

at the end of April, to say good-bye before beginning his trip to the East. Flaubert was then well enough to take his friend to see the estate of Croisset, which his father intended to buy (Du Camp, I, 184, 185). In May the patient was sent to Tréport, and he spent the summer at their newly purchased country house near Rouen, taking boat rides on the river with Achille or a servant, but not allowed to go out walking alone (*Corr.*, I, 141, 143). He was evidently better or he would not have written to Louis de Cormenin that he was ill half the time and bored the other half.

Louis de Cormenin was a student-friend at Paris, who used to dine with Flaubert, Du Camp and Le Poittevin at a restaurant in the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, where they talked of everything but politics until the hour of closing (Du Camp, I, 165). As Maxime has just left him, Flaubert naturally recalls these evenings spent discussing philosophy, æsthetics, plays and literature. He longs for "a little dinner club[2] of good fellows, all busy with the arts," meeting twice or thrice a week to eat and drink good wine and read some master poet. Then he continues: "I have just seen the ocean and am back in my stupid city; hence I am more bored than ever. The contemplation of beautiful things always makes one sad for a certain time. One would say that we are made to stand only a certain dose of the beautiful, a little more tires us. That is why commonplace natures prefer a

[2] In the first *Education sentimentale* (9), the hero dreams of a similar group.

river view to the ocean, and why there are so many who proclaim Béranger the first French poet. Let us not, however, confuse the yawn of the bourgeois over Homer with the profound meditation, the intense and almost painful reverie that comes to the poet's heart when he measures the giants and says to himself heart-brokenly: O altitudo!"

"We are made to stand only a certain dose of the beautiful!" Did Flaubert's overstrung nerves help in preparing him to appreciate the classics? Did physical weakness show him the value of restraint? In any case this letter's apostrophe to Nero and Heliogabalus —born of his ennui at Rouen—is far less significant than what follows:

"I am glad that you join me in hatred of Sainte-Beuve and all his shop," he pursues. "I like above everything the muscular sentence, full of substance and clear. . . . I like masculine sentences and not feminine ones, such as Lamartine's. . . . The men I read habitually, my bedside books, are Montaigne, Rabelais, Régnier, La Bruyère and Le Sage. I confess I adore Voltaire's prose and that his *Tales* are full of exquisite flavour to me. I have read *Candide* twenty times. . . . Now I am reading over Tacitus. In a short time, when I am better, I shall take up my Homer and Shakespeare again. Homer and Shakespeare, there's everything in them! all the other poets, even the greatest, seem small to me in comparison."

It is needless to point out the wholly objective character of all the books Flaubert has chosen to read during his illness. His need of avoiding all debauches of feeling apparently gave him a disgust for Romantic personalia no less than for the Romantic style; and the first *Education sentimentale* on which he was now engaged shows him for the first time attempting to write an objective novel. He only failed because he put too much of his own lyricism into his second hero, Jules.

Flaubert began the work at Paris in February, 1843, then laid it aside until the September vacation. His nervous attack interrupted the work, but he took it up again in May, 1844, and completed it in January, 1845. The novel contains 317 pages, and must be considered most fully. It presents to us the two Flauberts revealed to him by his illness: the man he would have liked to be and the man he was. For the first time in his writing the novelist is criticizing himself.

His theme is the development of character by love. It is the story of modern youth, like the masterpiece of the same name that he finished nearly a quarter of a century later. But the first *Education sentimentale* is an independent work, totally different in plot and construction and only related to the second novel in slight specific details.

There are two heroes: Henry is a law-student in Paris and his former schoolmate, Jules, a poor government employee in the provinces.[3] Henry is bored

[3] Henry's situation and his age, eighteen, correspond to Flaubert's and to those of Flaubert's hero Frédéric in the final *Education sentimentale;* Jules lives at Nogent, the home of the author's grandmother.

in the capital where he once longed to live, while Jules, whose mother wants to make him a notary, dreams of escaping from office work by writing a successful play and seeking the life of his fancy at Paris, among a group of friends all busy with literature or the arts. He imagines Henry meeting actresses and artists, frequenting the theatre and the masked balls. Such was the Paris of Flaubert's longings in 1840.

This letter makes Henry smile with superiority and pity. Installed by his mother in a boarding school (Balzac's *Le père Goriot* may have suggested a few details here), he has escaped in study the loneliness and boredom that even the cafés cannot dispel, but he begins to dream of the ripe charms of the schoolmaster's wife, Mme. Renaud, who comes into his room and comments on his devotion to his work (like the concierge mentioned in one of Flaubert's letters). Emilie Renaud, like Mme. Arnoux in the second *Education,* is feature for feature Flaubert's Maria grown older; he had renewed his acquaintance with the Schlésinger family, and often dined with them (*Corr.,* III, 76).

Mme. Renaud's circle is made up of bourgeois types painted with malicious realism; Mademoiselle Aglaé seems to be a first sketch for La Vatnaz in the later novel, and Ternande is, like Pellerin, an artist such as Flaubert met at Pradier's studio. I suspect that Morel, Henry's only confidant at Paris, is a sketch of Flaubert's uncle Parain, for Morel is mature, sympathetic and very much of a *bon vivant* also, and Henry likes him in spite of the differences in their characters.

Far from Paris Jules complains in letters that Henry does not write (like Flaubert to Ernest[4]); he recalls their common past, their old Romantic ideals; he mentions the fireplace where they talked and looks forward to Henry's visit at Easter: all this is autobiographical. Henry, encouraged by Morel (Cf. second novel, 24), dreams of Mme. Renaud, he feels "caught in her garments,"[5] he "begins to love her hands, her gloves, her eyes, her gowns, her furniture . . . her house . . . her street." Flaubert will use almost the same words in describing Frédéric's love in the second *Education sentimentale* (78).

Mme. Renaud plunges Henry into despair by failing to come to a rendezvous in Paris, on a rainy day, another situation that Flaubert will use in his final novel (399). Then comes Henry's declaration, made with the "magic facility" that we find in dreams. Henry looks in the mirror after she has gone and finds himself handsome (Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 29, second *Education sentimentale,* 71), he abandons the Code to think of her (*Madame Bovary,* 319), buys flowers, has his hair curled and then rumples it to give a greater distinction (like Léon in *Madame Bovary,* 329); and their courtship begins with letters, exchanges of locks of hair and portraits (*Madame Bovary,* 235). Henry has found his ideal physical type, being born

[4] Frédéric also bewails his exile in the provinces to Deslauriers in the second *Education sentimentale,* 133.

[5] Cf. a letter to Louise Colet (*Corr.*, 1926 edit. I, 245): "Je vis en rêve dans les plis de ta robe," and *Madame Bovary,* 47: "L'univers, pour lui, n'excédait pas le tour soyeux de son jupon."

with a preference for brunettes (77; Cf. Léon's similar taste in *Madame Bovary,* 387); he likes women of thirty (23; Cf. second *Education,* 232).

Jules in the provinces falls in love with a pale romantic blonde, an actress playing Adèle in Dumas' *Antony,* which Flaubert had not ceased to admire (Du Camp, I, 164). Mlle. Lucinde has the ethereal and taciturn beauty of Nodier's Northern heroines, but when she speaks she is given the drawling, throaty voice of Mme. Dorval, which Flaubert had learned so thoroughly that for weeks he spoke only in the tones of his favorite actress (*ibid.,* I, 164).[6] The director of the troupe Bernardi offers to perform his Romantic drama *Le chevalier de Calatrava,* but when Jules, with "style flowing in his veins," has dashed off the last act, Bernardi finds excuses for not concluding arrangements.

Henry in Paris meanwhile goes to a ball given by Mme. Renaud, where he suffers tortures because he is unable to dance and is too timid to attempt it, even with her. We remember that in the second novel Flaubert gives this autobiographic trait to his hero, Frédéric; and we cease to wonder at the novelist's preoccupation with balls and masquerades when we find that Henry (like the author of *Novembre*) spends the night after the ball thinking over his past. The chapter is, however, full of realistic portraits, and

[6] Does this infatuation mean that Flaubert fell in love with her, and put this love into Jules' story, as Anatole France put his boy's love for an actress into the tale of Jean Servien?

Henry's talk with Morel the next day is a fine bit of grotesquerie satirizing the inability of an egotist to listen to another egotist. The young Romanticist is learning.

He is drawing no less on his old memories. When Jules relates the Sunday family-dinners at which established Philistines of middle age "ridicule his literary aspirations" with: "Where will that lead you?" and "You'll get over that," advising him to do as everyone else does, we can recognize Flaubert's father and his friends (Cf. Du Camp, I, 220). The barrel-organ disturbing Jules' pleasure over a beloved book (Cf. *Novembre,* 249) is another memory, which the novelist will use later in *Madame Bovary* (90). As Flaubert is now telling Jules' story in the third person instead of by letters, one concludes that this chapter was written after his illness, especially as the slur on Sainte-Beuve's style (p. 87) is parallelled by a similar criticism contained in a letter to de Cormenin dated June, 1844.

Jules, "aimant à aimer" like Saint Augustine, "constantly waiting for an indefinable something that never came" and unable to distinguish reality from his dream, naturally falls deeper in love with Lucinde, while his family blames him for frequenting the actors. The silent and enigmatic Lucinde is a first sketch for a later heroine, for she makes him think "of that race of Eve's daughters that came to destroy men, of those magical women who sport with serpents, enwrap their

bodies in their folds and calm them by talking to them (p. 100)." So Salammbô was first suggested to Flaubert by some snake-charmer of a fair at Rouen.

Jules awaits with impatience the return of Henry from Paris for the Easter vacation. Here again Flaubert is thinking of himself and Ernest in 1841. The meeting gives him a chance to contrast the characters of his two heroes, and we see that Jules is Flaubert with all his exuberance, sensitiveness and timidity, but now mature enough to criticize and even ridicule himself (102). Jules has all of Flaubert's outworn illusions, for he asks Henry how many mistresses he has, imagining the life of a student at Paris in the fabulous colours lent to it by Homais. Jules considers his lady far above Henry's; "since she was a girl, and, therefore, a virgin, he freed her from all of life's materiality, without imagining she could have intestines in her belly or corns on her feet;" and he feels that Henry does not admire her enough (Cf. second *Education sentimentale*, 85). Nor does Henry sufficiently praise Jules' verses (Cf. *ibid.*, 21). But he opens his purse when Jules is asked by the actresses to lend them a hundred francs.

When Henry returns to Paris, Mme. Renaud becomes his mistress, in a scene that Flaubert thought good enough to cite to his mistress, Louise Colet, to prove his possession of a genius for style (*Corr.*, 1926 edition, I, 243-244). This scene is remarkable for its power: he notes the fascination of her gaze, "like a luminous fluid;" he sees as in a dream her bare

shoulders smooth as yellow marble, the veins of her heaving bosom. "It lasted for a century, the whole earth had disappeared, I saw nothing but her pupils growing larger and larger, I heard nothing but her breathing." He kisses her on the eyelids (Cf. second *Education sentimentale,* 385); she passes her hand through his hair (*Novembre,* 206). Something of this scene vivid as an hallucination will pass into all Flaubert's novels when he describes a similar crisis in courtship (*Madame Bovary,* 132, 326; second *Education sentimentale,* 120, 385, 513). Now Henry's room is filled with memories of her presence (Cf. second *Education sentimentale,* 269).

As Henry is writing all this to Jules, he receives a letter telling him that all is over; Lucinde has fled, together with all the troupe, leaving only debts behind. Jules has pursued her carriage on foot up a long hill, caught a glimpse of a blue dress floating in the wind, and seen the carriage disappear over the horizon, flashing in a fitful gleam of sunlight like the chariot of Salammbô. He has dreamed of suicide while crossing the river, returning. All his illusions are dust, for in reading over his drama he finds that it is "false and silly, worthless and strained," as Flaubert did when he read over *Smarh* in 1840. Jules concludes that life is good for those who have a passion or a goal (*Corr.,* I, 36), and that Art is but a thing that bursts in our hands when we press it.

Henry's successful love is depicted with scenes of passion more vivid than those of *Mademoiselle de*

Maupin, or those of Flaubert's later novels. When he writes the second *Education sentimentale* he will give to his hero Henry's pride in seeing his mistress in a company and thinking of the charms reserved for him alone (535). Henry is happy now, because "happiness depends on one's notion of it." But he blames himself for not feeling "all the magnificent exaggerations he has read of in books"—another personal note. In his carriage rides with her he dreams of fortunate couples going in their chaises to Italy (*Madame Bovary,* 56; second *Education sentimentale,* 245, 531), rapt in the bliss that he will parody by the vulgar cab in which Emma Bovary and Léon find their love's fulfilment. They long for a wilderness to shield their love; then they grow bolder and cease to take precautions in their meetings, revelling in the thrills added by their danger (second *Education sentimentale,* 536). Mme. Renaud delights in rousing Henry's jealousy by affecting love for her husband, then calms these waves of anger like Neptune with his *quos ego*—"so admired by my professor of rhetoric," says Flaubert (129), who will use this figure again in *Madame Bovary* (4).

In Chapter XIX Flaubert's ironic view of marriage appears when he relates a conjugal quarrel, ending in a reconciliation *à la Molière.* Grotesque, too, is the scene that follows. The Portuguese student Mendez grows weary of his fruitless adoration for fat Mme. Dubois and makes a *voyage à Cythère* whose sequel calls for the attention of a physician. Another ironic page is given to Henry's boring confidences to Morel, so volu-

ble that they prevent the latter from paying due attention to a fair equestrienne at the circus in the Champs Elysées. Morel's parting speech, "Adieu, heureux homme!" is another touch repeated in the second *Education sentimentale* (52).

We now revert to a long analysis of Jules' spiritual recovery—which will also be Flaubert's. "Love having failed him, he denied the existence of love." As his disillusion had been caused by poetry, he considered it a lie and gave it up (143). He abandoned the pathetic fallacy of the Romanticists after trying to recapture his lost ecstasies in the scenes that had beheld them: "the skies do not veil themselves with clouds when our hearts are bursting." He plunged into work to forget, after failing to find in books any parallel to his own situation,[7] missing in them "that precision which brings out the outline, the details that colour it; in short, that peculiarity for which he was searching." Reading over *René, Werther* and Byron, he recognized that "his admiration smacked too much of that personal sympathy which has nothing in common with the disinterested contemplation of the real artist (144)."

Flaubert is growing objective! If Jules thinks of suicide, it only shows the price he paid: for Flaubert, like his hero, is now indifferent to all the concerns of men; "human life seems to him like a masked ball

[7] Frédéric, in the second novel, will seek such parallels (245).

(145), where men shove and shout, while he stands in a corner too proud to take a part (Cf. second *Education sentimentale,* 107)." He is even inwardly critical of the style of the letters that Henry shows him during the vacation, and "hopes that a day may come when he will view all such things with pity." Flaubert is maturing by exercise of his imagination, for Jules' wondering "what would have happened if Lucinde had loved him" hints that the author constructed all the rôle of Henry by imagining what would have occurred if Mme. Schlésinger had responded to his adoration.

Henry is not completely happy very long, even after the end of the summer vacation reunites him to Mme. Renaud. Emilie is jealous if he merely looks at other women and longs for a *solitude à deux.* Both are moody: "their passion after its long fermentation began to sour like old wine (150)." "When they reach a certain point all the feelings, even the sweetest, turn serious," adds Flaubert, "just as the gravest thoughts turn to the grotesque." Emilie becomes more exacting and urges Henry to follow a straight course to success (Cf. second *Education sentimentale,* 119, 193). They reproach each other for incomplete confidences: "since there always remains even in the sincerest avowals something that one does not tell (154)." Flaubert will use this *pensée* again in his second novel (474; Cf. also *Corr.,* II, 75). Henry feels every day more dominated by her (150); he struggles against his bonds (156), but always succumbs to her spell. Flaubert is observant enough to realise the price of love (Cf.

Léon's reaction to Emma's domination, *Madame Bovary,* 391). Impatient of any curb on his personality from women (*Corr.,* I, 243), he will from now on lose no chance to show in the career of Henry the price he himself would have paid if he had won the aging lady who still drew all his dreams. "He knew that there were fairer women than she in the world, but none fair in the same way and none so fair to him (153-154)."

Flaubert has learned that lesson of disillusion by the force of his imagination and his observation. But the warmth of his description in the scenes of physical passion shows that he would have preferred to learn it from experience like his hero. Let us follow out this experience which Flaubert imagined for Henry since he could not have it for himself, because the novel now splits into two detached stories of disillusion only connected at the end by a comparison of their results. In our next chapter we shall take up the evolution of Jules without a paramour to teach him, the stoical reform he accomplished through studying the passions in books, in his own experience, and in that of others.

Henry's sentimental education is learned bit by bit from the ineluctable facts of life. He regrets the early days of his courtship, when a handclasp or a kiss was enough for his happiness; he realises, with pained surprise, that the mistress whose image held such seduction for him in absence can bring him only a reality

"known a thousand times (174)." His disillusion turns to fresh desire, and weary of the monotony of their lives, they plan to find a bliss less limited in a new land; like Emma Bovary (276) they will flee to America. "As-tu nos passeports?" Emilie asks her lover at the beginning of chapter XXII, using a phrase which will recur in *Madame Bovary*. Emilie is impatient to start because she can only see life through the coloured glasses of her love; Henry, seized by a retrospective sadness from the moment he burns their letters, is troubled as the decisive moment approaches and sorry to leave the house which already seems a part of his heart. We remember that with all his mad longings for travel, Flaubert never left Croisset, his suburban home near Rouen, even after the death of his mother made it possible.

"I only know through my dreams and cannot describe to you that supreme melancholy of an ocean voyage," says Flaubert, who was able to draw upon his own memories for his fine realistic description of Havre and his characterization of the sea-captain Maître Nicole (*Souvenirs intimes,* xvii). Nevertheless, he gives ten pages to the crossing, not forgetting to describe the captain as bored by the life of travel that seems so attractive to Henry, and thinking only of the cottage in his native province that he hopes to purchase for the longed-for day when he can quit his life of wandering!

And he makes his hero also turn back, after his choice, to the things he has given up. One thinks of

Flaubert hesitating to begin his Eastern trip in 1849 (Cf. Du Camp, I, 321-322) when one finds Henry gazing eastward at the ship's wake, his mind now drawn by a reminiscent exoticism toward Paris and his past. To reinforce the moral, Flaubert refuses to give his narrative the brutal realism then current in maritime fiction, thus puncturing another "idée reçue." "There wasn't much swearing or kicks," except when the captain had a two days' attack of toothache (his own experience in Paris). But he does, however, give a half-page to the realistic figure of the captain's servant, a negro and an ex-slave, now returning to the land of the blacks to end his days, after pursuing a faithless mistress from Toulon to Havre, afoot. Flaubert adds that "he also had completed his sentimental education."

Henry is gradually completing his in the sufferings of sea-sickness, in regrets for his past and in the thought that he has no fuller felicity to expect in the future. But after all he is still happy in the physical possession of his love; and Flaubert's irony now turns fiercely upon Henry's father and mother, who in the next chapter come to Paris to find Morel and learn about their son. Four pages are given to the portrait of Gosselin *père,* a typical bourgeois holding "ready-made ideas on all possible subjects, considering every young girl *pure,* every young man a *'cut-up,'* every husband a *cuckold,* every poor man a *thief,* every constable *a brutal fellow,* and every part of the countryside *delicious.*" Flaubert is already collecting stupidities for his Dictionary of conventional ideas.

Monsieur Gosselin is as conservative, anti-clerical, commonplace, narrow-minded and inept as Homais in *Madame Bovary*. But unlike Homais, he is not presented in action, except in the grotesque interview he has with the deserted pedagogue, an interview ending in a visit to Henry's room, where they discover a Chateaubriand, a lot of German books and even a copy of the highly immoral *Notre-Dame de Paris*. "You allow your pupils to read Victor Hugo, in your own house! . . . Isn't that the novel in which the author depicts a priest who——" This touch sheds another light on the episode of Abbé Bournisien in *Madame Bovary*.

Henry's career in the United States soon becomes a vain search for employment. He suffers because he cannot give his devoted mistress the life he has promised her. And Flaubert notes that misfortunes help the growth of love only until it has reached its apogee, after which every torture endured diminishes passion. Henry realises this poverty of his emotions, no less than the defects in his training that make him a material failure; he begins to doubt himself and all that he had loved; he doubts his mental capacity, his heart, his love for Emilie, his past and even his future. He fears that Emilie may perceive this, then hopes she is passing through the same process, but she remains exclusively devoted to him and satisfied in her servitude of love; she is the ideal mistress, throwing him a kiss from her window when he leaves the house and casting herself into his arms at his return. At this date Flaubert did not know Louise Colet.

Emilie is the ideal mistress, as Mme. Schlésinger seemed to Flaubert the ideal wife. And since everything has its compensation, Flaubert, the individualist, makes Henry vaguely irked by the chain of her devotion, now mute for him because he knows all her thoughts. When Henry tries to generalize or philosophize, he can see by the astonishment in her face that there is an abyss between them. He comes to realise that the development of a passion in two lovers is never synchronous, that one is always a little ahead of the other, and that thus the Romantic dream of complete union is impossible. Henry now knows the end of all of her sentences, the intonation and the gesture and look that will go with them. Mingled with all his memories, she fills his life so entirely that his own personality is lost, submerged.[8] He is no more than a shadow. Here Henry is clearly the egotist Flaubert.

What would have happened had he not met her? wonders Henry. Next, he asks himself why he loved her, why he doubts that he loved her. Then he returns to her with all the bitter ardours of an old man, seeking a fresh irritation for his senses in all that at first disgusted or bored him, hoping that he might find in her a pleasure of another sort. Monstrous desires invade his soul; he longs for shapes from another world, he calls to his aid all the frenzies of the flesh. He mistakes for love his debauch of the senses and wonders at the disillusion that follows, so different from the earlier satisfactions of his passion. And this radi-

[8] Léon in *Madame Bovary* feels a similar reaction, p. 391.

ant vision of the past adds to the chaos of his feelings, wherein are mingled pleasure and disgust, realisation and doubt, together with torture over the future.

At this juncture Henry receives a letter from Jules which is a masterpiece of parody, satirizing most of the youthful ideas of Flaubert and all his generation. Jules rants about the dull life of the provinces, regrets that he has no vice to make him happy, longs for an adulterous love with a notary's wife, declares women do not care for him and that he has refused several, that he would like to adore them and that they bore him, analysing himself *ad nauseam* and only mentioning the name of Henry on the fifth page of his letter. Then he bursts into Romantic rhetoric over the bliss he imagines to be Henry's, with a mistress "he has chosen among all women," in a land of palm-trees and virgin forests! He asks Henry if he is collecting primitive ballads "full of rubies and sapphires as the plumage of the birds there;" exhorts him to win success and wealth in a land where "all the roads are open;" tells him wealth doesn't matter after all when the heart is filled with love, etc. This dithyramb plaintively ends: "think of me some beautiful evening . . . while leaning on the shoulder of your mistress and breathing the perfumes of the lemon trees and aloes, look at the dazzling stars . . . and think that I, too, am every evening lifting my gaze upon a sky less opulent, that sends me only the rain of its clouds and the despair of its gloom!"

Henry is eager to share the bitter emotion that this unconsciously satiric glimpse of his own past has given by its lyrical ineptitude. He hands the letter to Emilie. She reads it quietly and returns it to him with a conventional expression of genuine but uncomprehending sympathy; "Poor boy! he seems much to be pitied!"

Henry can only look into her soft eyes with the surprise and terror of one gazing into a coffer that once contained a treasure (226). "Nothing left! nothing! again that everlasting sweet and silly expression, that same smile of her white teeth![9] So she understood nothing at all? so she felt nothing? But what narrowness, what an excess of cruelty or stupidity in the commonplace outpouring of her affection for that unknown egotist, who lamented in windy phrases his imaginary woes!"

So he draws away from her, he is tempted even to beat her in order to make her weep or cry out, to see her face changed at least once in her life. From now on all is ended for him. He sees that every drama of passion must end, give place to a farce or a comedy; he ceases to demand so much from his heart and is happier for that decision. Soon after he begins to earn their living; one day is like the next; Henry almost sinks back into the contentment of the bourgeois, bottled up in the muddy vinegar of his provincial city (230). Involuntarily we think of the experience of

[9] Cf. the second *Education sentimentale*, 561: "Cet œil de femme éternellement limpide et inepte . . ."

Emma Bovary, finding in adultery all the platitude of marriage (*Madame Bovary,* 401).

After eighteen months the notion of returning to France comes to them. All that they have missed in America they hope to find in their own country. But once landed, the lovers are soon parted by their friends; Henry is sent to complete his study of the law at Aix in Provence, and Emilie goes to live with her friend, Mlle. Aglaé. Henry promises to write, but very soon finds it hard to resume in his correspondence the languishing or furious tone of his old effusions; their letters dwindle in length and frequency after six months; finally Mme. Renaud yields to the pleadings of her friend and returns to her legal lord, ignorant that he has been consoled in her absence by a maid who resembles a sketch by Molière. And this commonplace story of middle-class adultery is ended, not by a tragedy as in *Madame Bovary,* but by a farce satirizing the Romantic duel (Cf. the abortive *affaire d'honneur* in the second *Education sentimentale*). Monsieur Renaud meets Henry in front of a bookseller's stall, and is soundly drubbed with missiles from the convenient shelves!

Thus ends the story of Henry's sentimental education, the results of which we shall take up when the author compares Jules' completed evolution with that of the henceforth conventional and successful Henry. This episode of disillusion may owe some of its vividness to Balzac, especially to his *Illusions perdues.* But life gave directly to Flaubert the figure of his heroine,

whose resemblance to Mme. Arnoux of the subsequent novel is far deeper than an outward identity. In the later novel he drew her portrait as she was, the ideal wife and mother; here he draws her as the ideal mistress for whom he longed, but with a pen sharpened by his failure to attain her, and an ink distilled from the acid of "sour grapes." In such a mood Flaubert set himself to describe what would have happened had he won her, and had he found his reactions afterward like the reactions of the lovers he had noticed in life and in books. He generalized his own emotions in order to create this story of the decomposition of a grand passion. Written at twenty-three, it is a worthy prelude to the story of the decomposition of a romantic personality that he will write ten years later in *Madame Bovary*.

VII

FIRST EDUCATION SENTIMENTALE

"The character of Jules is clear only because of the contrast of Henry," wrote Flaubert to Louise Colet in 1852 (*Corr.*, II, 84-85). "At first I had only thought of the character Henry, but the necessity of a foil made me conceive that of Jules. . . . Speaking of literary creation, there are in me two distinct types of fellows, one who is infatuated with *gueulades,* with lyricism, with great eagle-flights, with all the sonorities of the sentence and all the altitudes of thought; and another that digs into the truth as deeply as he can, loves to bring out the petty fact as vigorously as the important one, and who would like to make you feel *in an almost material fashion* (*sic*) the things he is reproducing . . . Without my knowing it, the *Education sentimentale* was an effort to fuse these two tendencies of my mind. . . . I failed. . . . It lacks a chapter to show how the same stem inevitably split into two branches. . . ."

This judgment of seven years afterward tells us, first, that the story of Jules was added later, probably after Flaubert's illness; a fact that any reader might guess from the crude way it is soldered to the story of Henry; it therefore proves that Flaubert's realism as shown in the first part is not the result of his illness, as Descharmes believed; and it would lead us to think

that Jules is Flaubert, now "letting himself go" after the attempt at objectivity he had made in creating the figure of Henry. But Jules is not entirely Flaubert in 1844, as some critics would have us believe; he is in part the ideal toward which Flaubert is striving, an ideal conceived after weeks of helplessness and introspection had shown him the defects of his nature.

It is easier to conceive a stoic ideal than to put it into practice, or even to describe a hero who does so. Flaubert had opened up an interval in the story of Henry to show how Jules denied the existence of love because it had failed him, and of poetry because it had caused his disillusion (143). The youth that eighty pages further on wrote the silly letter to his chum (223) is not the realist convinced of the pathetic fallacy of nature's sympathy, nor the Jules seeking in books for a parallel to his own life, and not finding there the preciseness of outline or detail or the *particularité* for which he is searching. The youth envying in his letter an imaginary Byronic Henry who gazes, from his lady's shoulder, at a sky so dazzling he cannot support its light (225) is not the Jules who has read over Byron and *Werther* and *René* and found that "his admiration smacked too much of that personal sympathy which has nothing in common with the disinterested contemplation of the real artist (144)."

Thus even without the novelist's confession we see that Jules is an afterthought badly welded into the whole. Flaubert now makes his hero begin to learn Hebrew and to study Greek—a language which he had

himself determined to learn. Jules' desk is now loaded down with books: history, atlases, travels, albums of antique art, engravings after the great masters, poets of antiquity and works on modern science (156). He does not read all these books, but dreams over them, for he is now longing for action, for the satisfaction of every appetite and every passion.

First he dreams of wealth and its sequence: luxury and power. He dwells on this desire until the possession of riches in the modern world seems far too petty for one who has meditated on the festivals of Caligula and Cleopatra—till the sheer impossibility of realising all that he can conceive makes him renounce the whole conception and desire. We recognize the Flaubert who had already set forth this temptation of his adolescence in the vision of *Smarh.*

Then Jules' youthful desires turn to woman, successively pictured in "all the dreams of beauty that men have ever dreamed (159)," from the days of *Genesis* down to the Directory. "He covets them all, summoning them to him through his thoughts," living with the "veiled sultana" of Byron, enamoured, too, of the pale blonde beauties painted by Holbein. Reading Horace, he imagines the Ionian slave; he follows all the changing loves of the Romans from Cæsar to Heliogabalus and Theodora. He worships the courtesan of antiquity, dreams for days over the follies of Solomon, the gardens of Semiramis, the fleeing galley of Actium, the smoking lamp of Messalina; with Juvenal and Tacitus he lives again the orgies of the Empire.

This "retrospective concupiscence" is also Flaubert's, for in the second *Education sentimentale* (461) he notes its occurrence in his hero Frédéric, among the Renaissance portraits of the art-gallery at Fontainebleau. Jules, too, loves the women of the sixteenth century who read the *Tales* of the Queen of Navarre; he loves the women of Brantôme's pages, of Dancourt's and Piron's plays; he loves Manon Lescaut, the women of Faublas and even of the Marquis de Sade. "For is not poetry everywhere—if it is anywhere? . . . it breathes from the maiden's heart . . . and from the boards of scaffolds. . . ." So Jules reaches an ideal so purely material that he begins to hate matter; weary of the flesh he pities those who stop with the flesh (162). In the second novel Frédéric's love for Mme. Arnoux will be a spiritual adoration, and the merely physical love of Rosanette will give him a similar disgust (561).

Then Jules turns to the joys of danger and the pleasures of war, as Flaubert did in *Smarh* and in his *Mémoires d'un fou.* Like Flaubert the schoolboy, burning with "warlike ardours" over the *Lives of Illustrious Men* (*Corr.*, I, 246), Jules pores over Plutarch and the historians, longing for the days when the barbarians spurred on toward Rome or when the Arabs overran the coast of Africa. He loves, too, the life of the sea, the ocean and its violent energies (Cf. *Madame Bovary,* 50). He reads the *Imitation* and dreams of the Middle Ages and the cathedrals, the monks who spent their lives colouring missals or carv-

ing angels' heads in stone; he sees the faithful kneeling in prayer and feels an infinite wonder and an abyss of mockery in his heart (Cf. Byron, *The Giaour*).

Thus Jules spends the love that heaven had given him not on persons or material things, but on his thoughts. Little by little he withdraws from the concrete, from things limited and finite, to dwell in the abstract, the eternal and the beautiful; he loses his opinions of politics by dint of studying history; he is not happy, but his gloom is forgotten in the moments of spiritual egotism that come to him, "as to an eagle amid the clouds." In pride all the Romanticists found a Byronic compensation for their weakness: like Vigny in his *Moïse,* Flaubert is consoling himself for his real unfitness for life in the market-place.

The novelist also represents his generation in Jules' next phase, pantheism. What could such an idealist find in utilitarianism—that religion of service invented by a society of practical Philistines? Jules, the recluse, now tries to study Nature with "the intelligence of love," so as to enjoy the spectacle of the whole world "as a complete harmony." He plans to take up geology to carry him back to the days of the mastodons and the giant saurians; he loves to look at the oak-trees swaying in the wind, "as others love streaming locks of hair;" he mingles in one meditation the ant-heap and the noisy city, the singing lark and the roaring torrent. This identification of the writer with all external nature was common among the Romanticists; it is found alike in *Faust,* in Byron and in Gautier.

Then Jules plunges into history to live over the lives of dead empires with their vanished gods; in that infinite perspective he again beholds India, Egypt and Greece. He studies the obscurer epochs of humanity's awakening; he seeks for man's old gods and he finds new ones (164). This is a promise of the long procession of deities found in *La tentation de saint Antoine;* it shows that desire to live in the forgotten past which finds outlet in *Salammbô.*

Jules was gorging himself with history, trying to synthesize it in all its details: "his eyes were bigger than his stomach; but he taught himself not to demand from the ideal more truth than it contains, or from human life more happiness than it comports (165). . . . He found it difficult to get used to this harsh dieting, for he was born with a great inclination to seek the fragrance of orange-blossoms under apple-trees, and to take bladders for lanterns." Rabelais suggested this metaphor, and Rabelais helped to cure Flaubert no less than his hero.

"He had naïvely and seriously had all the passions in succession," continues Flaubert's portrait of Jules: "but had not let them develop; instead of that, they had dissolved of their own accord and floated off in an unattainable poetry; then he had seen that one must leave the passions in their place and poetry in its own, and he next began to study all that in a logical order, without complaining that thorns tear or that rain is wet.

"Not loving his country much, he understood humanity; being neither Christian nor a *philosophe,* he had sympathy for all religions; no longer admiring *La tour de Nesle* and having unlearned rhetoric, he felt the appeal of every literature. . . .

"Voluntarily, and like a king that abdicates on the day of his coronation, he had renounced forever the possession of all that is earned and purchased in the world, pleasures, honours, money, the joys of love and the triumphs of ambition; he told his heart to cease its storms and his flesh to blunt its goad; in himself as in others, he studied the complicated organization of passions and thoughts; he scrutinized himself without pity, dissected himself like a cadaver, finding sometimes in himself as in others praiseworthy motives for actions that we blame and baseness at the root of virtues. He did not wish to spare anything, he rummaged in everything, plunging his arms in up to the elbows; he turned inside out the lining of fine feelings, made the hollowness of words ring out, seeking in the features of a face its hidden passions, lifting every mask, tearing off veils, stripping all women, entering bedrooms, sounding every wound, sapping every joy.

"So he had very few illusions, although he was in the regular age for illusions; he did not dream of the ethereal woman nor of the betterment of the human race, nor of Andalusian loves, nor of guitars in gondolas, nor of a being that might understand his heart, nor a creed that might quench the thirst of his soul, nor of other things of the same ilk that one finds in newspaper novels (165-166)."

This was the evolution that Flaubert in 1844 desired and perhaps imagined was his, but which he imagined with such fixed purpose that later he really attained it. In his story of the two friends' trial by love, he shows the importance of this page by its insertion just before the flight of Henry and Emilie to America. Here was the dream he might make true for his own life, the vision coming through the gates of horn.

From this point the novel follows out the dream of Henry to the bitter end, before reverting to Jules thinking over his past during a country walk in autumn. Jules was now so detached from that past that he wonders at his lost emotions like one gazing into the hollow eyes of a skull. His pride and his will had so brusquely severed him from his youth that his heart was almost turned to stone (242). "Though he stirred up his sensibility by his imagination, he tried to annul its effects by his mind;" he pitilessly drove out everything that entered his heart, until "all fled beneath the lash of his irony, a terrible irony that began with himself and then attacked others with added violence and sharpness; he had almost lost his habit of self-pity." Unjust to his past, he had all but ceased to understand his dead passions: "If he had not felt himself daily obliged to study them as an artist and to seek them out in other people, and then to reproduce them by the most concrete and sharpest form (or to admire them as made plastic in style), I think he would have almost despised them (243)."

From this "excess of unintelligence" he was saved when he realised that these emotions were the necessary steps leading to his present state and his present philosophy; life is a problem in which eliminating a solution is a partial solution.

"And since the answer never comes, what use is there in waiting for it? . . . Isn't there some way or other in the world of reaching a consciousness of truth? If for him that way were Art, he ought to adopt it. And would he ever have had that idea of Art, or Art as enough (*de l'art pur*), without the preparatory sorrows he had undergone, or, again, if he had been caught in all the bonds of the finite? He who wishes to heal men's wounds accustoms himself to their odour . . . he whose realm is the human heart must wear armour over sensitive spots, put a vizor on his face in order to live undisturbed in the midst of the conflagration he kindles, invulnerable in the battle he is viewing; anyone who is engaged in the action cannot see the whole of it; the gambler does not feel the poetry of gaming within him, nor the debauchee the grandeur of debauch, nor the lover the lyricism of love, nor the monk perhaps the true grandeur of religion. If every passion, if every idea dominating one's life is a circle wherein we wander exploring its circumference and its extent, one must not stay shut in the circle, but take one's position outside (245)."

Here Flaubert sets forth his doctrines of objectivity

in Art. And as he considers reaching this standpoint a real attainment, he proves to his hero (and himself) that his past was not really wasted after all.

"To deny one of the epochs of one's own existence would be to show that one was as foolish as the historian who would deny one of the epochs of history. . . . All that he had felt, experienced, suffered, had perhaps come for purposes unknown. . . . All the things that once seemed to him so wretched might well have their beauty and their harmony; by synthesizing them and bringing them within absolute principles, he perceived a miraculous symmetry merely in the periodic return of the same ideas in front of the same things, of the same sensations in front of the same facts; Nature lent her aid to that orchestration and the whole world seemed to him to reproduce the infinite and to reflect the face of God; Art limned all these outlines, chanted all these sounds, carved all these forms, caught their respective proportions, and by unknown ways brought them to that beauty fairer even than beauty itself, since it goes back to the Ideal from which beauty comes, the Ideal that makes our admiration—that prayer of the intelligence in front of the glorious manifestation of the infinite intelligence—that hymn the wind sings in its joy when it perceives its kinship—the incense it sends up as a pledge of its love (246)."

As we have already seen, Cousin gave Flaubert this Platonic idea of Beauty (*Du vrai, du beau et du bien*), but the pupil certainly responded to Plato with a richer lyricism than his master.

This moment of mystic illumination resolved all Jules' doubts and self-questionings, as he emerged from them, "as from a dream," before the calm light of the setting sun. But in his return from his walk through the twilight he was followed by a mangy dog, which he suspected was the animal he once gave to Lucinde. He tried in vain to escape it, to drive it away and even to kill it; he suffered all the tortures of a nightmare while the dog ran barking along the river where he had once thought of drowning: if perhaps she were floating in those dark waters? At last escaping he went home and locked his door, filled with superstitious fears; then resolved to end his anxiety and his horror, he opened the door and discovered the dog lying on his doorstep (254).

"This was his last day of (indulgence in) the pathetic; after that he corrected himself of his superstitious fears," says Flaubert. But the episode (suggested by Faust and the poodle) would hardly be given eight pages if it were not symbolic. Professor Coleman reads in the incident Flaubert's rejection of the fantastic element in literature, so important in Faust; but it is simpler to see in it merely the notion that one cannot escape one's past. The calm acceptance of one's past, were it hateful as a mangy dog, is the only condition of one's recovery from it.

And Jules' recovery now proceeded apace. He learned geography and ceased to think that palm-trees grew in New York City; he gave up his love of mediæval costumes, boots, mantles, Venetian lagoons,

white-plumed velvet caps; "tempests lost considerably in his esteem; lakes with their everlasting shallops and their perpetual moonlight seemed to him so much a part of Keepsake-albums that he forbade himself to mention them even in familiar conversation. As for ruins, he finally almost began to hate them. . . ." All this shows how personal are Emma's exotic longings in *Madame Bovary* (52 ff.).

"He bade an irrevocable farewell to the maiden preserving her innocence and the old man borne down by his venerable looks, experience having taught him that we must not always admit anything angelic in the former nor anything patriarchal in the latter."

He gave up his admiration for Alpine shepherdesses, "making cheeses just like women of Lower Normandy," got over his tendency to find "sublimity" in all the bards and troubadours, in primitive poetry and translations from foreign, barbarian, cannibal or Esquimau poetry; "little by little he rid himself of those silly predilections we have for mediocre works —depraved tastes that come to us early and whose cause æsthetics has not yet discovered (256)."

It is needless to say that all this is the experience of Flaubert criticizing in the autobiographic *Novembre* his early Romantic readings.

"And, therefore, as a cure for that mania he (Jules) devoted himself to the study of books presenting characteristics different from his own, and stylistic patterns

that were not in his type of style. What he once used to like to discover was the unfolding of a fecund personality, the expansion of a mighty emotion, that penetrates external nature, animates it with its life and colours it with its colour. Now he told himself that that wholly subjective manner, at times so grandiose, might well be false because it is monotonous, narrow because it is incomplete; and he sought at the same time a variety of tones, a multiplicity of lines and forms, their difference in detail and their harmony as a whole (256-257).

"Formerly his sentences were long, vague, windy, wordy, covered with ornament and delicate carving, a bit lax at the beginning and at the end, and he determined to give them an aspect freer and more precise, to make them more supple and stronger. So he passed alternately from one school to another, from a sonnet to a dithyramb, from the clean outlines of Montesquieu, sharp and shining as steel, to the clear, firm detail of Voltaire, pure as crystal and pointed as a dagger, from the plenitude of Jean-Jacques to the undulations of Chateaubriand, from the shouts of the modern school to the dignified pace of Louis XIV, from the spicy candours of Brantôme to the theological asperities of d'Aubigné, from the half-smile of Montaigne to the bursting laughter of Rabelais.

"He would have liked to reproduce something of the living sap of the Renaissance, plus the fragrance of antiquity that is found at the bottom of the new taste in the limpid and sonorous prose of the seven-

teenth century, adding to that the analytical clearness of the eighteenth, its psychological depth and its logic, yet without denying himself the acquisitions made by modern art, and preserving, of course, the poetry of his own age, which he felt in a different way and whose limits he broadened according to his needs.[1]

"So he began with all his heart that great study, style; he observed the birth of the thought as well as the form in which it dissolves, their mysterious developments, parallel and reciprocally adequate, a divine fusion in which the mind by assimilating matter makes it as eternal as itself. . . .

"By long contemplation of fine books in the candour of his heart, by filling himself with the principle that had created them, by considering them abstractly in the essence of their beauty and then relatively to the truth they set forth and expose, that is, their power, he learned what originality and genius are, and he acquired an utter disdain for all the rules of writing in the world. If each artist is called to reproduce the universal in the world and in nature, in accordance with the peculiar character of his talent and made concrete in an unique form, without which the special quality of the book would not exist; if every idea calls for a mould to fit it, if every passion varies in the man

[1] We must notice that in the second novel Frédéric escaped in study the obsession of his unrequited passion, "and plunging into the personalities of others, he forgot his own, which is perhaps the only way not to suffer from it (266)." In any case this study of Flaubert's is the basis of that hero's decision to write a history of æsthetics (209).

who suffers and gives a different note, if the human heart is an immense harpsichord which the thinker must cover in every octave, chord and discord . . . if every fire has its flame, every voice its echo . . . If language is made for thought, how can we bring to one level all these different heights. . . . Each work of art has its own rules of æsthetics, by virtue of which it is created and survives (258-259). . . .

"Having reached this critical impartiality . . . he discovered unknown beauties in writers he did not use to love, and singular weaknesses in books he used to think beyond reproach. . . . All the stupidities that have been written in discussing the sublime served only to make known to him historically the spirit of the different schools and periods with all their laughable vanities, still useful to us by the very excess of their ridiculousness (259). . . .

"As he dug deeper into history he discovered in it both more variety and more unity . . . and it dawned upon him that the monstrous and the bizarre had their laws as well as the graceful and the severe. Science recognizes no monster, it puts a curse on no creature, and it studies the boa-constrictor's vertebræ and the miasmas of volcanoes with as much love as the throats of nightingales and the petals of roses; ugliness exists only in the mind of man; it is a manner of feeling that reveals his weakness . . . for without that infirmity or that faculty, why should he swoon with pleasure before Beauty when he encounters it. . . . Spiders have their beauty, crocodiles theirs, like owls,

monkeys, hippopotami and vultures. . . . Are they not . . . all come from the same bosom, singing the same hymn of praise, returning to the same nothingness, rays of one circle that converge toward the same centre (260)?"

Chateaubriand may have suggested in his *Génie du christianisme* the beauty of crocodiles (Pt. I, Bk. 5, Ch. X), but far more significant is the fact that Flaubert, after his residence in Paris, is no longer following the literary movement at a distance; for this page exhibits the realistic doctrines and the scientific pantheism of the late eighteen-forties, the very spirit that lies at the heart of Balzac and of Leconte de Lisle.

"He tried to catch the same harmony in the moral world, and without being affrighted at anything he studied the criminal, the ignoble, the gross and the obscene, and those half-tints of what frightens or disgusts us, and he confronted them with the great, the worthy, the virtuous and the agreeable, in order to see how they differ and in order to admire their points of contact when such exist."

And as the poet must be a man, mirror humanity in his heart and be a part of it, Jules "required from the work of art its general significance as well as its plastic, intrinsic value; which lead him to study simultaneously humanity in art and I would almost say art in humanity, for there is an art in those periodic returns of the same crises and the same ideas. . . ."

Flaubert has been influenced by the notion of the philosophy of history, or by the books which gave his friend Le Poittevin the doctrine of "hypostases" or reincarnations, set forth by him in *Une Promenade de Bélial.*

"Henceforward he sought for man behind the costume, the epoch, the country; and in man he sought out his heart. He went from psychology to history, and from history he went back to analysis (261). . . ." In this study "each epoch lost for him something of that sharp colouring under which we are accustomed to envisage it . . . thus, as he often discovered an exquisite tenderness in savage hearts and strange cruelties in glances that seemed the tenderest, extracting from serious things the ridiculous or conceiving a drama directly he heard some simple phrase, in like fashion he got rid of many ready-made opinions in history and criticism (261-262). . . . He was in search of the courage that cowards had shown, the lack of spirit shown by the brave; he sought out the virtue practised by the vicious, and he laughed at the crimes committed by the good. This continual uniformity of man, however it may happen and wherever it may be found, seemed to him a justice that lowered his pride, consoled him for his inner humiliations, in short restored to him his real character as a man and put him back in his place (263)." Had this been wholly true for Flaubert instead of being an ideal, he would have been cured of his Romanticism.

"The world having become so broad for his con-

templation, he saw that it had nothing in it outside the limits of art—no reality nor possibility of existence. That is why the fantastic, which once seemed to him so vast a realm in the continent of poetry, now appeared to him as a mere province; he comprehended that nothing beautiful will ever be created by inventing animals that do not exist . . . by giving wings to horses, fish-tails to women's bodies, impossible creatures . . . bodiless dreams, which, presenting but one aspect according to the vague desire that created them, remain isolated one from another in their immobility and impotence. Yet one must accept this supernaturalism, which comes at the beginning of art and is found again at its end. . . . It was doubtless to express something that men carved in granite those monstrous sphynxes now lying on the desert sands (263)." And despite his criticism, two pages of historical psychology justify the use of the marvellous and foreshadow *La tentation de saint Antoine:* the fantastic has its place in art "as a development of the inner essence of our souls, as an overflow of the moral element," in order "to satiate those strange appetites that cannot be sated," and to express "our coveting of the infinite." To use its chimæras deliberately with any less valid excuse simply shows poverty of the artistic imagination.

"Then he was seized by an immense love for those few men above the greatest, mightier than the mightiest, in whom the infinite has found a reflection as the sky reflects itself in the sea; but as he continued to

view their works, they grew larger in his opinion, like mountains when one tries to scale them; the more he thought that he understood them the more he was crushed by them, a giddiness seized him, he did not wish to think that man could be so great (265)."

Jules visibly envies these men because "the hazards of life did not reach them, they wrote their songs of love from the depths of dungeons . . . poverty did not make them wretched, nor slavery make them slaves." Flaubert had got no such reward from lyrical writing.

But he, like Jules, can now see that "Homer and Shakespeare comprised and encircled humanity and nature; man in antiquity is entirely in the first, and modern man in the second . . . the most personal of poets show less warmth, vitality and even candour in expressing the single feeling that made them great than the two have shown in all the various feelings they have reproduced; while our belated literatures with all their acquired tricks and studied artifices have created nothing that approaches the sophisticated harmony found in these masters in its most natural and complete state. . . . Whence he concluded that inspiration must come from itself alone, that external stimuli too often weaken or denature it; that, therefore, one must be hungry to sing of the bottle, and to depict the fury of Ajax one must not be angry at all (267). . . ." Flaubert has come to recognize the objective grandeur of the classics, and the value of impassivity for the artist who would become a classic.

Having attained this vast synthesis of poetry and life, Jules now saw that history is greater than the historical novel because it is more comprehensive. Thus he "became richer by all the illusions he lost, his eyes discovered new horizons as the barriers that had surrounded him fell. Equally removed from the scholar fixed upon the observation of a fact and the rhetorician thinking only of embellishing it, he found a feeling in things themselves, and for him human passions followed mathematical curves in their unfolding. As for his own passions, he reduced them to formulas so as to see them more clearly, while his thoughts had so much warmth and boldness that they seemed to come from his heart (268)."

Then Flaubert makes his hero test his enthusiasms by the special bent of his own temperament. "Jules applied to the masterpieces of art that habit, contracted imperceptibly in studying the world and in analysing himself, of parodying the things that most pleased him . . . debasing every greatness and denying every beauty, so as to see if they would afterward rise up again in their primal grandeur and beauty. . . . For parody can destroy nothing that is indestructible, its knife is shattered against the imperishable marble . . . . hence glory, to be complete, needs to withstand mockery; mediocre indeed to me would be the triumph in which there were none to cast insult (268)." Here appears the basic influence of Cervantes' irony on Flaubert, no less than the service rendered him by the god Yuk. Yuk's laughter foretells his literary conversion.

Then in a magnificent page Flaubert justifies modern times as a subject for art, rejecting the prejudices of his youth in favour of the Middle Ages and antiquity (269). In its infinitely greater complexity the nineteenth century offers a far wider field to the artist, if he will wait until the details of his memories no longer dominate his view of the whole perspective. Flaubert will wait twenty-five years before picturing the eighteen-forties in the second *Education sentimentale.*

Modern times had destroyed comedy by eliminating the contrasts between different social types, now tending to one level. Jules proves that this criticism of the reviews considers men only in their externals. For him there is an even greater comedy in the Dryasdusts of the Sorbonne, the solemn and venal press, the Turcarets of the stock-exchange, the ministers of the new constitutional monarchy, the high mass of fashionable churches—now artificial as processions at the Opéra. He invokes Molière as he recalls meetings of philanthropical societies and partisans of temperance, Catholic writers spending their earnings in dissolute living, Saint-Simoniens and Fouriéristes; he finds the grotesque alike in the university, the French Academy, the queen of society who has taken up a shoemaker poet, the Hellenist who writes unreadable novels on antiquity and consoles himself by correcting anachronisms in his fellow-novelists. All this is caricature, become so universal that one cannot parody it (273). This is why Flaubert's humour is for the few.

Jules, too, finds few friends capable of following

him in his new attitude; when he sees that they do not understand his admiration for Shakespeare and Beethoven or his real insight into history, he drops all mention of art in his impatience of argument, and talks with *viveurs* on the inexhaustible subjects of wine, women and good cheer, only to become disgusted with them because they put no lyrical fervour nor originality into their timid or brutal loves and debauches (278-279). And Flaubert is at pains to show the ridiculous inconsistencies in all these men of the world *so soon as they act,* while Jules, "following a straight course" like the novelist,[2] "descended so quickly into all things that he saw their nothingness at the first glance," his impulse to act being destroyed by his irony. And perceiving that he is in disagreement with his own heart as well as with the world, he reaches the paradox that inconsistency is the supreme consistency (279). This is an earlier statement of Flaubert's creed as a realist: *ne pas conclure.*

Although full of longings, Jules will not make his action consistent with his desire: he rejects a love that is offered him (Cf. page 280 with the story told in *Corr.,* I, 248), and seeks out the actor Bernardi in order to hear him discuss Lucinde with details that degrade her and finally cure him of his passion (281). One suspects that Bernardi is possibly Maurice Schlé-

[2] Flaubert uses these very words of himself, *Corr.,* II, 145; cf. also the second *Education sentimentale,* 609.

singer for the incident is repeated in the second *Education sentimentale* (247, 264).

Jules, therefore, remains aloof from action on his tower of irony. Why? Simply because Flaubert is afraid, in his rejection of so many of his old ideals, of falling back completely into the herd and becoming a bourgeois.

"Two things happen," he asserts as author: "a man is either absorbed into society, adopts its thoughts and its passions, and then disappears in its universal tint, or else he falls back upon himself (275)." The first alternative hints of the fear, the terror rather, then actuating Flaubert. For his hero Henry becomes the conventional young Frenchman (282 ff.), following his instincts and deceived by them through his changing loves. Being also able to make friends among his own sex, he seems destined to make for himself a place in politics, like Flaubert's friend Chevalier, who in April, 1845, was to be named Procureur du roi at Calvi, Corsica. Henry takes life seriously as a bourgeois, gives up literature for political writing to advance himself, and being conventional and witty, is welcomed everywhere, while Jules lives alone and friendless and poor in the Latin Quarter. When they meet Jules finds that his former comrade has ceased to understand him; they now hold absolutely different opinions on every subject; they travel together in Italy, and the dreamy Jules wonders how the practical Henry can "see" everything and bring back a complete diary, while he has spent his days seeing a few things and

absorbing the life surrounding him there (299). Ernest was practical, but this competence as a traveller belongs to Du Camp, who published the narration of his Oriental trip with Flaubert soon after their return.

Flaubert refused to become a bourgeois like his hero Henry. Like Jules, he walled himself in with solitude in order to protect his soul against a world that might make him another Henry. For with all his rejection of Romantic *sensiblerie* he retained the Romantic pride.

This pride is perhaps the basic trait in the portrait of Jules at twenty-six which is opposed to the final sketch of Henry, the clever *arriviste*. Jules lives "in sobriety and chastity, dreaming of love, pleasure and orgies. . . . His greatest joys are a sunset, a rustling of the breeze in the woods. . . . The turn of a sentence, a sonorous rhyme, a bending profile, an old statue, the fold of a garment, give him long ecstasies. . . . He is poor, but . . . wine has a taste unknown to those who drink it, women pleasures unperceived by those who have to do with them, love a lyricism alien to those who are filled with it." Jules' life is obscure, but "gleaming within with magical light," it is as calm as the desert, but "history unrolls itself in his memory, humanity spreads out before his eyes, he drinks the intoxication of nature, and Art with her fires gives him light."

Jules has discovered the doctrine of Art for Art's sake that Gautier expresses in *Mademoiselle de Maupin:* this is the religion that guides his renuncia-

tion of action, and Flaubert speaks of his conversion with all the fervour of a true mystic. "All kinds of poetry and harmony are his, his the only poetry and the great harmony! His is the song of all voices, the marriage of all souls, the form of all bodies! He fills himself with colour, makes himself one with matter, gives body to spirit, spirit to substance; he perceives things men do not feel, feels things they cannot tell, relates things they cannot express. . . ." Like Gautier and Baudelaire, Jules is one of the second Romantic generation, the generation that found its god in Art rather than in passion: they made a passion of Art, and became its victims like the men ridden by the Chimæra of Baudelaire's poem in prose.

Thanks to Flaubert's tragic experience of passion in following Dumas, Hugo and the first Romantic phalanx, Jules has visioned even in 1844 the Parnassian impassivity. "Halting his emotion which would confuse him, he knows how to arouse in himself the sensibility that is destined to create; life furnishes him with the accidental, he expresses the immutable; what life offers him he gives to Art; all things come toward him and out of him, a flux of the universe, a reflux of himself. His life conforms to his thought, as a garment to the body it covers; he enjoys his strength through the consciousness of his strength; with his branches extended to all the elements he brings back everything to himself, and he makes his entire self concrete in his calling, in his mission, in the fatality of his genius and his labour, an immense pantheism,

which passes through him and reappears in Art (309). . . ." Jules at twenty-six and in 1844 already prefigures Leconte de Lisle.

"From now on he considers himself without vanity or self-complacency. . . . What does success matter? . . . Careless of his fame, indifferent to criticism. . . . if only he has expressed his thought just as he conceived it, done his duty and chiselled his marble, he does not care for anything besides. . . . He has become a serious, great artist, whose patience is tireless and whose belief in the ideal has no moments of doubt; by working out his style after the example of the masters, by drawing from himself the substance it is to contain, he has as a result obtained naturally a new manner, a genuine originality. It is the conciseness of his style that makes it so mordant, it is its variety that gives its suppleness, without its correctness of language its passion would not have such vehemence nor its grace such charm."

The first *Education sentimentale,* therefore, reflects not merely Flaubert's recovery from subjective Romanticism, but his conversion to the religion of Art. Both heroes embody the author's desires, Henry at the beginning and Jules at the end. He would have liked to win the lady of his love, but Marie Schlésinger was no Mme. Renaud, and Flaubert was not sure of his heart's contentment in any finite passion. So in the double love-story he said good-bye to that dream,

which if realised would have forced him into the world as a bourgeois among bourgeois. In his first sketch of Jules he caricatures the other dreams of his teens, his Romantic ideals. Something has died within him, something that has to die in all of us, and he tells the story of its death with mingled sympathy and ironic contempt.

Something, too, is born in him, and he sets it forth in what Jules makes himself at the end. Critics agree in finding Flaubert in the solitary genius described above, declaiming his own works to please his ears alone. But none notice that Jules is twenty-six and that Flaubert will not be twenty-six until three years after the novel is finished. Flaubert is still suffering from his malady, and is still far too weak in body if not in will to carry out the huge programme of study planned and executed by his hero. So we must consider that Jules is less a portrait of the author than the embodiment of what he hoped to become in three years, when he, like Jules, began to think of a voyage in Greece and Palestine.

The power to conceive oneself as different from what one is—that is the source of the tragedy or humour in all of Flaubert's principal characters from Emma Bovary on: they all suffer from an excess of imagination. Jules de Gaultier has built up on this human trait a whole philosophy, *Le Bovarysme,* in which he shows not merely the grotesque failures, but the vast results of this power in men and in human evolution. Flaubert always possessed this imaginative

faculty; now for the first time he yoked his imagination with reality to create for himself a model possible for him to attain. Jules is this Bovaric model who has withdrawn from life to the larger world of Art.

But we shall see by his letters that Flaubert himself did not make the great renunciation until four months more had brought back to him his health and power of will.

VIII

FLAUBERT AT TWENTY-THREE

Flaubert finished his novel January 7, 1845. Although illness apparently reduced the number of his letters, there are still enough to prove the novel a product of his imagination and his experience. "I desire few things in life," he wrote to Ernest during the months spent in tracing Jules' recovery (*Corr.*, I, 145), "and heaven ought really to give them to me. I ask from it neither love of women, nor the admiration of fools, nor honour, nor a position. . . ." In January, 1845, he tells his friend Vasse (*Corr.*, 1926 edition, I, 159) that he has spent the whole summer sailing and reading Shakespeare. "Since we returned from the country I have read and worked a great deal; I am now doing a lot of Greek and reviewing my history. . . . I do not see that there is anything in the world that I would prefer to a good well-heated room with the books I love and all the leisure I desire." Here we recognize Jules, learning from the classics, the ideal toward which Flaubert was striving.

Henry's practical bourgeois model appears in Flaubert's letter to Ernest, soon to be appointed Procureur du roi (*Corr.*, I, 146). For he asks him when he is going to sell himself to the government for 1500 francs a year and begin to denounce the immorality of modern literature. When six months later the appointment

comes, Flaubert tells his friend to keep on being the "handsome, well-got-up, good mannered and socially agreeable fellow, standing firmly, bracing his legs and holding his little fingers against the seams of his breeches (*Corr.*, I, 158)." This is Henry to the dot. Again in June Flaubert ironically congratulates Ernest (*Corr.*, I, 168), now "fixed, established, trampled down, invested with honourable duties and charged with defending public morality. Look into your mirror at once and tell me if you don't feel a huge desire to laugh," he adds. "So much the worse for you if you don't, that would prove that you are already so befouled by your trade that you have been made stupid by it."

Flaubert was well enough to accompany his family to Paris in March, although still on a diet in January (*Corr.*, 1826 edition, I, 159), and April 2 found them all with their relatives at Nogent. Here Flaubert wrote to Alfred Le Poittevin the first of the letters to that friend so far published, a letter full of the real Flaubert. We are at once struck by the grave and lofty tone of this letter—a note quite absent from the correspondence with Ernest. "It is now three months since we were really together, isolated in ourselves and in each other. There is nothing in the world like the strange conversations that take place in the chimney-corner of the dirty fireplace where you come and sit, is there, my dear poet? Plumb the depths of your life and you will confess as I do that we have no better memories, I mean more intimate and profound, more tender even by their always lofty character."

He relates briefly his stop at the capital after an absence of fifteen months. "I saw Paris again with pleasure; I looked at the boulevards, the Rue de Rivoli and the sidewalks as if I had returned to see them all after a hundred years' absence, and I do not know why I breathed freely to feel myself amid all that noise and that mob of humanity. . . . Everywhere I was walking through my past, retracing it like a torrent one climbs and whose waters murmur about one's knees." He goes to see the Collier girls, makes a vain attempt to find his "grand homme," Maurice Schlésinger, for whom he confesses "a tenderness not to be overcome;" then he visits a certain Mme. P——, who has eloped with a young man—possibly Flaubert's model for Mme. Renaud's adventure, since he says: "All that would need to be written up, delineated fully, painted or carved."

This letter announces to Alfred Flaubert's second Mediterranean trip. All the Flaubert family, except Achille, left in charge of the hospital, were celebrating the marriage of Caroline by escorting the bridal couple on their wedding tour; they were to leave Nogent the next day. Flaubert is planning to see Mme. Foucaud at Marseilles, "which will be bitter and farcical, especially if I find her grown ugly as I expect." Naturally he remembers how much Marie Schlésinger had changed, when he saw her in Paris five years after the summer of 1836 (*Corr.*, I, 262). "A bourgeois would say: you will be greatly disillusionized," continues the letter. "But I have rarely felt a disillusionment, having

had but few illusions. How insipidly stupid it is to vaunt a falsehood and say: poetry lives on illusions! As if disillusion were not in itself a hundred times more poetical." This Byronic character is what makes Flaubert a Romanticist, under his mask of realism.

The "voyage en famille" brought the young man only disappointment. In a second letter to Alfred from Marseilles, he is already crying for "liberty, freedom and rest;" he compares himself to a pedestrian tired out on a long hill. "The farther I go, the more unable I feel to live the life of everyone, to participate in family joys, to show warmth for things that make others enthusiastic, or make myself blush at things that arouse their indignation. . . Do not travel with anyone! with anyone! I wanted to see Aigues-Mortes . . . la Sainte-Baume and the grotto where the Magdalene wept, the battlefield of Marius. . . . This is the second time that I have seen the Mediterranean like a tradesman!"

Flaubert's journal of this trip (*Notes de voyages,* I, pp. 3-61) shows that what he desires to find is a poet's immersion in the past of humanity (Jules' ideal), an aftertaste of his own past and a deeper self-identification with nature. He hunts for Roman and pagan remains; "full of hope," he reads Horace as they sail down the Rhone through Roman France, "toward the sea of one's dreams." Again he sees the fig-tree growing from the cornice of the amphitheatre

at Nîmes, but now withered and leafless—a symbol of Nature's vast indifference to man's works such as two years after he will seek in the grass-grown château of Brittany. Here and under the arches of the Pont du Gard he longs for Alfred; he thinks of him, though ignorant of his friend's wish that he should do so, while watching the river at Lyons, and recites Alfred's verses, listening to the murmur of the historic Rhone. At Arles and at Nîmes he pictures the Roman throngs once swarming in the arenas, at Arles he imagines the actors who once played Terence and Plautus there, pouring forth obscenities like the ordure he sees emptied upon the marbles of the Greek Theatre. He visits again the Maison Carrée and confesses that "the Gothic has nothing of that serenity."

He visits also the the cloisters of Saint Trophime at Arles. "It was in a church like this and in such an atmosphere that Don Juan came and stood hidden behind the columns, watching the bent necks, the pure profiles leaning over the *prie-dieus,* breathing in the fragrance of femininity and flowers (*Notes de voyages,* I, 11)." This is probably the germ of the unfinished *Une nuit de Don Juan,* conceived in the lazaret at Rhodes (Cf. *Corr.,* November 14, 1850), an undated scenario which is given in Flaubert's *Œuvres de jeunesse* (III, 321). The idea returned to him in the churches of Genoa (*Corr.,* I, 156). "It must be sweet to love there, in the evening, hidden behind the confessionals, while the lamps are being lighted; but all that is not for us, we are made to feel it, to express

it and not to possess it. . . . Think only of Art, only of it and of it alone, for it is everything! Work, it is God's will, that much seems to me clear." He is slowly working out his problem.

So at Marseilles Flaubert did not seek out Mme. Foucaud, whose deserted lodgings he went to look at the very first evening (*Notes de voyages*, I, 11). He tells Alfred that he might have found her by exercising a little will-power; but "I lack what I lack for everything that isn't Art: dogged purpose. And, moreover, I have an extreme distaste for returning to my past, though my pitiless curiosity forces me to dig and search through all things down to their muddiest depths (*Corr.*, I, 153)."

Of course, the past obsesses him: the past is the prison of all romantic souls. At Toulon his notes remark this constant disturbing influence, caused by thoughts of his first voyage. "The distance that separates my memories is blotted out, they always fall in parallels and take the same level, so that they now all seem to me almost equally remote. At the end of a certain time the shadows and lights mingle, everything assumes the same tint as in old paintings. That is why one likes to return to one's past." This synthetic patina is the distinctive quality of Flaubert's landscapes.

Like Jules, Flaubert is trying to escape from his own past into the past of humanity. During a boat-ride in the Mediterranean at Saint-Mandrier he thrills with

the thought that the waves murmuring along his boat gave forth the same ripple at the prow of Cleopatra's galley and of Nero's. In the calm midland sea he finds the very light and colour of Homer. "Our natures prefer the ocean; therein lies the difference between the romantic and the classic: the ocean is vaster but perhaps less beautiful (*Notes de voyages,* I, 15)." Flaubert is seeking sensations in which to forget his discouragements (*ibid.,* I, 13), for he is not yet the stoic Jules; he is eager for impressions which he may sublimate into thought.

But a *voyage en famille* is not favorable to poets. During an evening stroll at Fréjus, while Flaubert is "breathing-in the night like a perfume," for it is then "that the soul opens its wings and soars in peace," this lover of the night, "whose whole being expands in it like a high-pitched violin when its pegs are loosened," is forced to return to his family, "without having finished with that sensation, to return after merely brushing it, before ruminating it (*ibid.,* I, 16)." At Oneglia, near Vintimiglia, he again has this experience. "I had to go back! always the same story!" And he tells his longing to live at Oneglia (*ibid.,* I, 21), to sleep all day long on the beach and watch the blue of the ocean through the blue smoke of his cigar. Considering his father's prohibition of the weed, "n'avoir rien qu'un cigare" shows clearly one motive of these evening strolls; other motives, too, are possible at twenty-four. His pleasure at Oneglia is spoiled in advance by "the idea that it was not going to be free and complete"—

a prevision that will blast most of his hopes for ideal moments in this pilgrimage. Hence he can only gather a host of fleeting impressions, for the whole Corniche, "a road sixty miles long that should be covered on foot (*Corr.*, I, 166)," is traversed in a few days: on the first of May he writes to Alfred from Genoa.

Flaubert's revolt against his "personally conducted" tour now explodes. At Nice he mentions suffering hours of horrible agony and anger (*Notes de voyages*, I, 18) because of his family's plan to go on to Naples; his experiences so far "have been too crude artistically" for him to wish to prolong them further (*Corr.*, I, 154). "At Naples I should have had an impression too exquisite not to be terrified by the thought of seeing it spoiled in a thousand ways. When I go there I want to learn to know the life of the ancients in its very marrow, I want to be free, alone or with you . . . to be able to sleep out doors, to go out without knowing when I shall return. Then without shackles or reticences, I shall let my thoughts flow warmly because they will have the time to come, and to boil over as they like; I shall sink myself in the colour of the objective (world) and bury myself in it with an undivided love. Travelling should be a serious task. . . . If you knew all the things that they unintentionally render abortive within me, all that is torn from me and all that I lose. . . ."

Flaubert also notes a certain difference in his past and present reactions to the sights he has seen. "There was a time when I would have made many more reflec-

tions than I now make (I don't know what they would be), a time when I would have reflected more and looked less. Now, on the contrary, I candidly and simply open my eyes at everything, which is perhaps superior."

All this explains the lack of reflective comment in the *Notes de voyages.* Flaubert is "looking" with all his eyes and storing up material. In the Castle of the Popes at Avignon he notices the crisp brevity of the historical anecdotes related by the old woman who showed them the monument: "never any reflections in her abundant stories, nothing but the fact. I must remember her manner and gesture when she said: 'They assassinated them.'" The same curt narration and almost the same phrase will be used by him in *Salammbô* (50); the love of one commonplace traveller for his parrot will be reproduced in *Un cœur simple.*

Genoa, the marble city, gives Flaubert "such a pity for modern luxury that he is tempted to live in a stable." The novelist's total indifference to the lack of splendour in his library is noted by his niece (*Souvenirs intimes,* xv). At Genoa he again thinks of Don Juan in the churches, while the gardens suggest to him thoughts of the pleasure-gardens of the Romans; he goes to the Opera, where he notices "the most beautiful woman" he has ever seen; he blushes with surprise at the sight and is afraid of falling in love with her. Returning later to see her again, he observes another, and a third somewhat older and more maternal makes him

remark: "There was a great deal to muse about in her. The woman of forty has not yet been introduced into literature and this one would deserve it (*Notes de voyages,* I, 33-34)."

But like Jules fleeing a barren present to seek his mistress in an exotic past, Flaubert loves no less than the painted ladies of the theatres the painted portraits of the museums. He spent many long hours in the rich galleries of Genoa, and his *Notes* show how many pictures he wished to transfer to the gallery of his mind. He will later remember the calm of Titian's painting of *Judith and Holophernes*—which inspires in the *Notes* a comparison with Musset's *Lorenzaccio* and the paintings by Vernet and Steuben—and he approves (*Notes de voyages,* I, 24-25) the stupidly simple manner of the heroine as she puts the severed head into the sack. The force of this came back to him in his ending of *Hérodias;* the splendid Biblical subject of Judith he, too, longed to treat, and this longing finally expressed itself in his chapter of *Salammbô, Sous la tente.*

In the Balbi palace Flaubert saw Breughel's *Temptation of Saint Anthony.* Its importance for him is shown no less by the page of description he gives it (*ibid.,* I, 36-37) than by his comment that for him it has blotted out all the rest of the gallery. "This picture," he writes to Alfred (*Corr.,* I, 162) "has made me think of arranging for the stage the Temptation of

Saint Anthony, but that would require a different fellow from me. I would gladly give the whole collection of the *Moniteur,* if I had it, and 100,000 francs besides, to buy that picture. . . ." When Flaubert wrote his drama he used in it his description of Gluttony, taken from the travel-notes.

The whole Flaubert family returned northward through Turin, since Caroline was not strong enough to continue the projected journey to Naples. Turin does not impress Flaubert, filled as he is with memories of Genoa, he would prefer to live in Rouen. May 13 finds them at Milan, where in the Ambrosiana he muses over Lucrezia Borgia's letter to Cardinal Bembo and a lock of her blond hair; here, too, he sees the sketches by Raphael and by Lionardo. At Monza he is shown the comb of the queen of the Lombards, Theodelinda, and cannot resist the temptation to use it, thinking of the long-dead queen. His evocation of her beauty (*Notes de voyages,* I, 39), at once classic in outlines and Germanic in colouring, announces the ideal which twelve months later he will find in Louise Colet.

Of course, the party visits the Italian battlefields, but Flaubert mentions this only casually in the letters. They see the Chartreuse of Pavia, and the Teatro della Scala, which Flaubert explores with a religious emotion. "A theatre is a place as holy as a church . . . because in theatres, too, human thought grown tired of itself seeks to escape from the real (*ibid.,* I, 43). . . ." One must not forget that he is thinking of his Saint

Anthony. He visits a theatre of marionettes and succeeds in identifying himself with them until he comes out of his illusion stupified at the giant height of men. "A real world of a different nature arises for you, and as it mingles with your own you wonder whether you do not exist in the same life as they (43)."

From Milan they drive to Lake Como, where Flaubert the Romanticist delights in observing the actual pleasure-boats of Romantic "keepsake" engravings; he finds the landscape here is "amoureux" and the villas seem to him built for "study and love." It is not so easy to imitate the stoic Jules! In the art-gallery he returns several times to Canova's *Cupid and Psyche,* and finally kisses the marble form of the nymph. "May I be forgiven, that was my only sensual kiss for a long time. It was something more beside, I was kissing beauty itself. . . ." In spite of his excuse the impulse shows that the vital illusion was returning to him with his slowly returning health.

Flaubert is naturally enchanted by the sight of the three lakes: "it is here that one would like to live and die." At Como he finds the landscape "Shakespearean;" on the "Earthly Paradise" of Isola Madre he expects to see a silk-robed sultan, with a yataghan at his side, appear from behind the thicket; in this "most voluptuous spot . . . you feel in a mood wholly sensuous and wholly exquisite (*ibid.,* I, 46)." Even more significant is his comment that "if it lasted long it would hurt you, so strange it is; then you become used to it and the feeling passes like anything else." Very tired,

he visits that evening Isola Bella, and finds that its palace only makes him regret the marble halls of Genoa.

Leaving Italy by the Simplon, they return north through Switzerland. At Chillon Flaubert visits the dungeon of the famous prisoner, but is most impressed there by the name of Byron carved on one of the pillars. His reaction to this sight, like his comment on the Auberge des Adrets (*Notes de voyages,* I, 17), with its memories of Robert Macaire, show the Romanticist he is still at heart. This personal contact with a relic of his hero Byron gives him one of the high moments of his journey (Cf. also *Corr.,* I, 162-163). "When I saw the name of Byron there . . . I was seized by an exquisite joy; I put my hand on my heart and I felt it beat harder than the moment before. . . ." During this voyage he had often put his hand on his heart and felt no response.

And now, homeward bound and already thinking of the desk awaiting him, of his future and his ambition, he is everywhere eager to find memories of great writers for his inspiration and encouragement. At Clarens he seeks out the site of Madame de Warens' house. He still regrets Italy, for at Lausanne the sight of an Italian woman prompts him to comment unfavourably on the pale beauty of the Swiss girls. At Coppet he visits Mme. de Staël's château, sees her tomb, and talks with the old woman who has served

both her and Necker. At Geneva he spends a sentimental evening on the Ile Jean-Jacques Rousseau, looking at Pradier's statue of the philosopher and "trying to think of him" with all his soul (*Notes de voyages,* I, 55). "Quelle homme! quelle âme! quelle lave et quelle onde!" His letter to Alfred recalls so vividly Rousseau's early dreams of the theatre that we see they are also Flaubert's. He visits Voltaire's château at Ferney, and, talking with the old man who had been his servant, he regrets the eighteenth century; at Besançon he searches out through many difficulties the house where Hugo was born. No doubt that all these visits are inspired by his literary ambition; at Ferney he examines the old servant avidly, "as if Voltaire had left on him something that I could gather up!"

Thus the homeward half of the journey is largely a literary pilgrimage, a literary pilgrimage punctuated by thoughts of women. Else why does he mention his three visits in Paris to the Champs-Elysées (where the Collier girls lived: cf. *Corr.,* I, 272), and comment on "the fine story" they would make? "There," he concludes, "I saw the flaw in my soul's breastplate as in those of others (*Notes de voyages,* I, 60)." A comparison of the dates shows that this refers to the innocent avowal of love in the eyes of one of the sisters—a story that Flaubert relates without mentioning names in a letter to Louise Colet (*Corr.,* I, 248). At Auteuil he goes to see a lady who inspires the following reflection, suggestive of a later heroine of his: "the poetry of the adulterous woman is true only because she is

herself free in the midst of fatality (*Notes*, I, 60)."

The letters show that they passed through Nogent and Paris about the beginning of June; and the middle of that month finds Flaubert writing from Croisset. Hope lures him on; he feels "the vague appearance of a more fragrant breeze" as he concludes his journal.

We must now turn back to the letters of May, 1845; for in the long pages to Alfred Le Poittevin, whom he was to meet at Paris, Flaubert reveals himself ripened by his journey no less than by his illness.

In the first place, he has now pricked the illusion of travel: *Cœlum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.* Writing from Milan to Ernest in Corsica, he assures his homesick friend that "the human heart is built of such contrasted bits that he would regret Corsica if he were back home in Normandy. "Cela est réglé," he adds; and this time he does not dread his own return. "I shall take up again my calm, unchanging life, divided between my pipe and my open fire, bent over my table or sitting in my arm-chair."

Yet his letter to Alfred, written the same day (May 13), does not show that this conviction has cured him in both mind and heart. He madly regrets the Mediterranean which he has just quitted: "I bear the love of antiquity in my heart, I am touched to the depths of my being when I think of the Roman keels that used to cleave the changeless, ceaselessly rippling waves of that ever-youthful sea. . . . The absence of

tides dividing time into regular intervals makes you forget that centuries have passed between Cleopatra and you. Ah! dear old chap, when shall we go and stretch ourselves on the sands of Alexandria, or sleep in the shade of the plane-trees of the Hellespont?"

This lyricism is prompted by sympathy for Alfred in his boredom at Paris (Cf. *Annales romantiques,* 1910, 184-187), for Flaubert's own attitude is stoical. He is learning how to assimilate his life to the model he set in his hero Jules. "Teach your breast to consume but little air . . . think, work, write, roll up your sleeves to the arm-pits and carve your marble like the good workman who, with unturned head, sweats and laughs over his task; it is during the second period of a writer's life that travel is good for him, but in the first it is better to cast out all the really intimate, original and individual part of oneself. . . . The only way not to be unhappy is to shut yourself up in Art and count all other things as nothing, for pride replaces everything when it is seated on a broad base (*Corr.,* I, 160-161)."

It is his own experience that Flaubert describes, in order to give Alfred the courage to abandon the law definitely for the life of letters (Cf. *Annales romantiques,* 1910, p. 186). For the letter continues: "As for myself, I am really comfortable enough now that I have consented to be always uncomfortable. . . . I regret, however, neither wealth, nor love, nor the flesh.

. . . I have said to practical life an irrevocable farewell. From now on, for a long while, I ask only five or six hours of quiet in my room, a big fire in winter, and two candles in the evening to give me light." Flaubert now knows that only in his room at home can he escape the petty interference of his family, live the free intellectual life of the artist, and enjoy that concentration without which his pen cannot create.[1]

His physical state had certainly its effect upon his new stoicism. He had had two more crises during his journey (*Corr.*, I, 166), and was evidently still far from strong, despite his good appetite (*Corr.*, I, 158). We may infer that the voyage brought him no new erotic experiences, to judge by the confession made to Alfred, May 26: "It is singular how withdrawn I am from woman. I am sated with them as those who have had too much love must be. I have become impotent by the outpouring of those splendid dreams which I felt bubble too high ever to see them overflow. Never before a petticoat do I feel the desire and curiosity which urges you to unveil the unknown and seek the new."

Yet in a letter to Ernest, written June 15, he enumerates the marriages of four of his friends and adds: "everyone is marrying but me." Flaubert had considered marriage in 1842 (Cf. Descharmes, 485). This explains his confession to Alfred (*Corr.*, 1926 edition,

[1] His niece says (*Souvenirs intimes*, xxx): "every change of place . . . disturbed his labour. In order to write he required an extreme tenseness, and it was impossible for him to attain this desired condition except in his study, seated at his big round table, sure that nothing would come and distract him."

I, 185): "have you ever thought how many tears have been made to flow by that horrible word 'happiness'? Without that word we should sleep with more tranquillity and live more comfortably. Sometimes strange longings for love come over me, although I am disgusted with it to my very stomach; they would fade out perhaps unperceived if I were not always watching with pricked-up ear to catch the movements of my heart."

This whole letter breathes of the stoic renunciation Flaubert has just made. "Once more in my cavern! Once more in by solitude!" it begins: "by dint of thinking it uncomfortable, I have come to appreciate my comfort; from now on for a long time I ask nothing else. What do I want after all? Isn't it liberty and leisure? I have voluntarily weaned myself of so many things that I feel rich in the midst of the most absolute deprivation. Yet I still have some progress to accomplish. My 'sentimental education' is not finished, but perhaps I am close to the end.

"I did not feel on my return the sadness I possessed five years ago. . . . Now my life seems to me arranged in a regular manner. Its horizons are not so broad, alas! not so varied certainly, but they are perhaps further-reaching because they are more restricted. Here are my books before me on my table, my windows are open, all is quiet. . . . I have thought over Pradier's advice,[2] it is good, but how can I follow

[2] This was evidently in regard to the sedative effect of taking a mistress: cf. "conseils médicaux de Pradier," at the end of *Notes de voyages*, and Alfred's letters.

it? And then where should I stop? I would only have to take that seriously and get its full pleasure from it; I would be humiliated by it! That is what I ought to do, however, and that is what I shall not do. A normal love, at regular intervals, reciprocated and substantial, would take me too far outside myself, would disturb me; I should get back into the life of action, into physical normality (*la vérité physique*), into common sense, in short, and that has been harmful to me every time I wanted to try it. Besides, if that were destined to come, it would."

And it did come a year later in his passion for Louise Colet. But this summer he was to spend in peace, at Croisset, in his garden and in his canoe on the river (*Corr.*, I, 167). "As in the past, I shall go back to my writing, reading, dreaming and smoking." By the middle of August he is living "like an oyster in his shell," occupying himself "exclusively with literature and history;" he has resumed in Herodotus the study of Greek and is reading Shakespeare. "Since what I dread is passion, movement, I think that if happiness exists anywhere, it consists in stagnation, ponds have no tempests. My bent is almost fixed, I live in a regulated, calm and definite manner. . . . I have never spent any better years than the two that have just passed, because they have been the most free, the least binding at my arm-holes. I have sacrificed a great deal for this liberty, and would sacrifice still more (*Corr.*, I, 171)."

Flaubert was now well enough to shave himself with

his stiff right hand (*Corr.*, I, 176), although he still had to wear his *séton*. He had a seaside vacation at Tréport, but spent most of the summer alone with his mother at Croisset, where he enjoyed visits from Le Poittevin, Du Camp, Schlésinger and Ernest Chevalier. The books that he read were objective: Shakespeare, Quintus Curtius, Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir* and Voltaire's plays. His careful analysis of these plays certainly helped him later in constructing the dramatic plot of *Madame Bovary*. He speaks vaguely of planning his Oriental tale, first mentioned in a letter to Alfred that spring, but probably wrote little if at all on any composition of his own.

But he does exhort Le Poittevin to labour. "Work, work," he adjures his former mentor in September: "write, write as much as you can, as long as the muse will carry you. That is the best steed, the best carriage to take you through life. The weariness of existence does not weigh down our shoulders when we are composing. It is true that it only makes more terrible the moments of fatigue and abandonment that follow; but so much the worse! Two glasses of vinegar and one glass of wine are better than a glass of water coloured with claret."

His choice is, of course, prompted by his physical condition. Later he confessed to George Sand (*Corr.*, IV, 195): "I was cowardly in my youth; I was afraid of life." But that choice had its compensations. Admitting life only as a reflection, like the lady of Shallott, he "no longer feels the hot transports of youth

nor the bitter despairs of other days." Even in memory these things of his past are mingled in a universal grey. "I observe that now I do not often laugh and am no longer sad. I am ripe." *Je suis mûr*—the adjective connotes all the aspects of that minor death that men have to die in their forties.

It is Flaubert's premature maturity that enables him to address his elder, Alfred, like a younger brother. "You speak of my serenity, dear old chap, and envy me for it. It is astonishing, that's true. Ill, worn with irritation, subjected a thousand times a day to moments of atrocious agony, without women, without life, with none of the playthings of this world, I keep up my slow labours like a good workman who, with rolled-up sleeves and sweat-damp hair pounds on his anvil, without a care of the rain or wind, the hail or thunder. I was not like that before." We have seen all that he had to pass through to attain his calm.

And Flaubert continues: "This change has come about naturally. My will, too, had something to do with it. I hope that it will lead me farther. All that I fear is that it may weaken, for there are days when I feel so slack that I am frightened." His physical recovery was not, of course, without its relapses.

Then he comes to the motive of his will and the reason for his renunciation of life. "I think I have attained a comprehension of one thing, a big thing: it is that for men of our tribe happiness is to be found

in the *idea,*[3] and not elsewhere. Search out the quality of your nature, and be in harmony with it. Horace says: *Sibi constat.* Everything is in that." From this Olympus it is easy for him to add: "I do not think of glory, and not often of art. I seek to spend my days in the least tiresome way, and I have found it. Do as I do, *break with the external world,* live like a bear, a Polar bear, and consign everything to the devil—everything and you, too, with it, except your intellect." All this exhortation makes one certain that Flaubert created the character Jules to encourage not merely his own spirit, but also the flagging genius of the friend to whom he dedicated his novel. Disgusted with the law, Alfred was spending his energies in dissipation; Flaubert would make him, too, a monk of letters.

Hence his letter does not conclude without a mention of his artistic progress. He has now attained an increased, ironic sensitivity, a sensitivity exasperated to the point that he can take nothing for what it seems to be. "Now, there is so great an interval between me and the rest of the world that I am sometimes astonished to hear the most natural and simple speeches. The most commonplace sentence sometimes makes me dwell on it with a singular wonder. There are gestures, tones of the voice that I cannot get over, and stupidities that almost make me giddy." Flaubert's realism springs from this exasperated sensitivity, and

[3] The Idea is *la contemplation de l'immuable: i. e.*, the Spinozistic vision of the world *sub specie æterni* (Cf. *Corr.*, 1926 edit., I, 310).

its satire is the reaction of a temperament essentially romantic under its hard-won classical restraint.

The Idea so dominates his vision that all life has become for him strange and new even in its banalities. "Have you ever listened attentively," he asks his friend, "to people who were speaking a foreign language that you did not understand? I have reached that state. By dint of trying to comprehend everything, everything now makes me muse. Yet it seems to me that this gaping wonder is not stupidity. For example, the bourgeois is to me something inexhaustible. . . . To make a thing interesting you have only to look at it for a long time."

He was to gaze at the bourgeois of Rouen another decade before he finished *Madame Bovary*.

EPILOGUE

This long letter to Le Poittevin, written during September, 1845, three months before Flaubert's twenty-fourth birthday, may be taken as the terminal date of the novelist's youth. He has now glimpsed and rationalized his final attitude; his father's death in mid-January of the following winter, the death of his sister in child-birth three months later, only definitely turned the page for him upon the past. A born pessimist, he tells Du Camp of his prevision that "life was like a sickly smell of cooking escaping from a ventilator. One has no need to have eaten to know that it will nauseate one. Yet I do not complain of that. With-

out taking anything from my sensations, I have analysed them as an artist." And the letter affirms: "At last I am going to work again, at last!"

He was, of course, destined to fall in love as soon as his health was fully regained: that experience was necessary. But he did not forsake his writing and reading for Mme. Louise Colet, whom he first met in June, 1846, at Pradier's studio, and who gave herself to him July 29 (*Corr.*, 1926 edition, I, 378). Indeed, after the first mad letters and the first quarrels he wrote her mainly at week-ends, "keeping her in the shop-parlour of his heart until Sundays." He firmly refused to live with her at Paris, telling her that filial piety kept him tied to his mother at Croisset; he made great efforts to convert her to his religion of Art, and adjured her to save the essence of her love for her writing. Interrupted by quarrels, by occasional visits to Paris to see her, and by his travels, their correspondence lasted for eight years. In the 1926 edition Conard publishes all the letters, with their curious mixtures of Romantic love, discussions of Art and literature and corrections of Mme. Colet's verses.

The monk of letters paid for his descent into life's arena by several attacks of his malady: *quibus nervi dolent Venus inimica.* So in May, 1847, he escaped, in Du Camp's care, to realise another dream of his youth, in a walking-trip through the châteaux-country and Brittany. Along the Loire he now sought the theatre of his boyish dreams of French history, when he fondly hoped to become the Walter Scott of France.

This pilgrimage of three months was related by each of the travellers in turn, and Flaubert's half was published after his death under the title *Par les champs et par les grèves.* It shows an immense progress in its mixture of impartial observation and terse pungent commentary. If it occasionally bursts into rhetoric—rhetoric worthy of Chateaubriand—if it is marked throughout by a personal tone that tells us that Flaubert is not quite the Jules of his fancy, this journal also exhibits a constant sense of reality and exact detail: it shows an advance toward realism that is quite as evident as the author's delight in reliving the past and his ironic sense of Nature's indifference to all the works of man.

It is the first book that Flaubert "wrote with difficulty," holding before himself Jules' ideal of style and trying to repress his natural lyricism. When it was done Flaubert's curbed but unquenchable soul exploded in the first version of *La tentation de saint Antoine,* for by a periodic law which betrays the tenseness of his self-repression, his realistic books are always followed by Romantic ones. "What is natural to me"—he confessed in 1853 (*Corr.,* II, 238)—"is the non-natural for others, the extraordinary, the fantastic, the clarion voices of metaphysics and mythology." Brooding over Alfred Le Poittevin's death (April, 1848) and the philosophical drama he had discussed with him, Flaubert began the following month his vast fantasy: the Old Adam in his heart came to the front again. He knew that in his juvenilia he had not given

definite literary form to the lesson youth had taught him, the *vanitas vanitatum* first fully developed in *Smarh:* the obsession of this idea could only be ended by the catharsis of composition.

His first crude Byronic inspiration here becomes, however, a universal philosophical nihilism built up by long historical studies. The saint's imagination ranges over all forms of life and belief, as he did in his solitude at Croisset, and his lyric tone shows that like his hero Jules he lived the pageant of human history. *La tentation* is a vision of dead religions: all the gods from remotest antiquity, all the mystic or heretical or obscene cults that drew his youthful curiosity, pass before the half-dazed anchorite—a mad procession whose meaning is vanity.

But the anchorite is the Flaubert we know in the juvenilia. For here we find Flaubert's own boredom and his nightmares, his longings for happiness, his tortures of the flesh and all his suppressed desires, his orgies of the imagination in the loves of antiquity, his aspiration for the pomps of Babylon and all the glories of the past, his desires for exotic climes, his longing for knowledge and his lust of the infinite, his disillusions and his doubts, his hatred of action, his loathing for the flesh and its domination, his renunciation of life, his victory over its temptations, his pride and its dangers—even his perverse delight in the grotesque. All these personalia are a part of *La tentation de saint Antoine,* and the echoes of Flaubert's earlier pages are more numerous than even the borrowings from

Ahasvérus. His friends found it far too lyrical to publish and Flaubert was far too lyrical to accept their advice without bitter protests.

Despite his vision of a complete stoical reform, Flaubert was still a Romanticist living in his imagination. When he went to Egypt that autumn (1849), he strove to marry his youthful dreams with his actual living, dressing like a Turk, with a red fez on his shaven head, "getting a bellyful of colour," making the most of this debauch of Romanticism that he had always dreamed of. It took nearly two years of travel to sate his lust for strange climes and for the splendours of local colour. But the reaction finally came when he noticed that his moments of æsthetic delight were followed by nervous depression: "for all your travelling, you get no gaiety from it (*Corr.*, II, 39)." Emotion wore him out, and then came disillusion to show him things as they were.

"You take a great deal of trouble in order to see ruins and trees, but between the ruin and the tree you find something quite different, and from it all, landscapes and filth, you have left a calm and impassive pity (*Corr.*, February 9, 1851)."

The Oriental journey was necessary to prepare him for writing *Madame Bovary:* the East enables him to idealise his background in the novel. By the law of his exotic temperament, he dreamed of Normandy and his home on the banks of the Nile (*Notes de voyages,* I, 74). He needed a long voyage to show him his youthful self in a true perspective, its lyrical follies emphasized

by the sordid realities of his Childe Harold's pilgrimage. The hurly-burly of active life and its dissipation of his personality was needed to make him long for the concentration of solitude (*Corr.*, II, 59, 61), without which he could not write; as the voyage progressed he was tormented by lyric desires for "style" that thrilled him even to tears. So it was really the Orient that gave us *Madame Bovary,* which bathes in an equal irony his neighbours and his wildly Romantic adolescence—Flaubert's greatest novel, for it contains the perfect mixture of his youth and his experience.

Flaubert admitted the personal element in the story, averring: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi." Two years after his return he wrote to Louise Colet (*Corr.*, II, 347): "The things that I have felt most deeply present themselves to me transposed into other countries and experienced by other persons." This, of course, he could later accomplish, but *Madame Bovary* contains all his youthful dreams, beheld as through the wrong end of an opera-glass, reduced to the measure of his provincial heroine. From the very first scene at the Collège de Rouen to the ironic note on the decoration accorded Homais at the end,[1] the novel is full of personalia: we have found in the works of Flaubert's 'teens its theme, its irony and its satiric realism, which only needed to be softened by the objectivity learned in the Orient from a close contact with humanity. When in 1850 Flaubert learned to say: "stupidity con-

[1] For Flaubert's obvious contempt of such honours, see the *Correspondance*, I, 115, 280, *et passim.*

sists in the desire of drawing conclusions (*Corr.,* I, 446), he became one with his model Jules; and curiously enough, this motto of all his writing, this illumination, occurred to him at Damascus!

Now conscious of his two literary selves, of the Romanticist and the Realist within him, he could well yield to the reaction that came with the completion of *Madame Bovary.* Returning to his *Saint Antoine,* he corrected it mercilessly, "exasperated by its declamatory passages (*Corr.,* III, 69)." He turned back to the splendours of the past that had always attracted him in his youthful works, determined to present them with the objective pen of modern realism. "I am going to write a novel the action of which will take place three hundred years before Christ," he announced (*Corr.,* III, 112): "I feel the need of quitting this modern world, in which my pen has dipped too long, and which moreover tires me as much to reproduce as it disgusts me to behold." This disgust was greater because of the inculpation of *Madame Bovary* and his complete disillusionment in his "Muse," Louise Colet, who was now defaming his character in autobiographic novels.

As a Romantic youth he had found an escape in history: we remember the queen of France whose delineation saved him from rhetorical suicide, and his many compositions inspired by the Middle Ages or the Renaissance. Now that those themes were stale, Flaubert followed Gautier in his flights to more remote and exotic times. Not history merely, but archæology pointed the way, and Flaubert gathered his material

for *Salammbô* like any scholar, not only from the classics and from the Bible, but from all the dusty ant-heap of researches amassed by excavators and experts. In *Saint Antoine* he had presented the unvisited Orient of his youthful dreams—an Orient of metaphysical systems, an Orient of the mind; now he carved a material physical Orient, stuffing himself with his subject up to the ears" in order to paint his fresco with the local colour that "makes a book exude reality." The Realist even made a second trip to Africa for his backgrounds, and then destroyed the labour of months and began his task anew.

But the result is still in a sense subjective: *Salammbô* exhibits the Flaubert who as a boy scribbled so many sanguinary pages, the boy whose adolescent fancy revelled in horrors because of his repressions. "Let us be ferocious," he writes to Feydeau in 1861 (*Corr.*, III, 302): "let us pour spirits of wine upon this age of sugared water." *Salammbô* betrays the monk of letters shut up in his study for years on one subject, the martyr of Art who had denied the call of the world, the "man-pen," as he called himself, who proudly told his mistress that for him "living had no concern." The author of *Salammbô* was the creator of the alchemist Arthur in *Le rêve d'enfer*.

But the ghost of that life he had denied came back to him through his study-window. He was not halfway through *Salammbô* before he confessed (*Corr.*, III, 221): "The deeper I bury myself in antiquity, the more I am recaptured by the need of writing some-

thing modern, and I am cooking-up in the back of my brain a mess of ordinary people." This literary ragoût was to be the definitive *Education sentimentale.*

Flaubert planned this novel as an objective work, a sort of "histoire morale" of the men of his generation. He made his heroes types of the political theorists, men of society and literary Bohemians that he had known; he did not trust his memories, but based their Utopian discussions and their intellectual background upon researches made in old newspaper files and reviews, since the writing of *Salammbô* had taught him objective scholarship. Now at the age of fifty he had learned to generalize his own experience, but he put into the novel the fruitless love of his youth for Marie Schlésinger, and all the boredom of his student days at Paris. In fact, every other page has a memory of something in his juvenilia or his letters, while every paragraph of description is bathed in the magic colour lent by reminiscence.

Trois contes also reflect the Flaubert of the present study. In *Un cœur simple* we have a full-length portrait of the old servant first sketched in *Rage et impuissance;* in the other tales the aspirations toward the Middle Ages and antiquity that we found in so many youthful pages. The reminiscent tenderness of the former is a commonplace of literary criticism. And despite all that Flaubert says about "spewing forth his venom" in the satire of *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* even that "book of his revenge" has its moments of pathos; it would seem that its panorama of disillusion recalled his own disillusionment.

For in *Bouvard et Pécuchet* Flaubert returns again to his youthful memories, to parody all the enthusiasms that he felt in the high moments of his adolescence, his love of history, of travel, of ruins, of romantic passion, of metaphysics, of literature, scholarship and æsthetics, adding thereto all the sciences, politics, spiritualism, alchemy, religion, education and many other things: enthusiasms which one after the other burst in the hands of the two stupid clerks. For one who knows how many of these ambitions once belonged to the author, the result is not humorous.

Bouvard et Pécuchet is thus a personal creation, and in it the early impress of *Don Quixote* upon Flaubert's imagination attains its final expression. In *La tentation de saint Antoine* he had set forth the vanity of metaphysics, in *Madame Bovary* the vanity of Romantic love, in the *Education sentimentale* the vanity of ambition; he will now show the vanity of education made universal, the dream of modern democracies. The æsthetic circle is now complete. In *Bouvard et Pécuchet* we have not merely a full-length portrait of The Clerk plus the Dictionary of accepted opinions conceived in Flaubert's youth, but the absolute nihilism of *Smarh,* applied to the world of material things.

"There are gestures and sounds of voices that I cannot get over, and stupidities that almost made me reel," wrote Flaubert to Le Poittevin in the month taken as terminus of this study, September, 1845. Trying to understand everything, he found that everything made him muse and wonder. In his last novel

Flaubert produces that very effect, which he later calls the hall-mark of a masterpiece: he makes the reader muse and wonder at the marvel of his result. The novel has the force of reality, and everyone gifted with a modicum of Flaubert's sensitive idealism finds in it those overtones of impersonal irony that reality provides.

This sort of realism is only to be felt in all its implications by those who know the novelist's *Œuvres de jeunesse* and his *Correspondance,* by those who have followed, at least vicariously, the life-tragedy of this martyr to letters. The way to an impersonal irony is long and thorny. So, too, is the way of Art. To know Flaubert's wanderings through a youth in which these paths find their beginnings is to know Flaubert the man and the mystic, while to study his self-education through his early pages is to realise the power in the books that made him great. There are still a few novelists who believe in Art, and not in the so-called realism of the journalistic or the *femme de chambre* school. There are still a few fortunate readers who require beauty, either of form or content, in the novels they read. This study is, therefore, dedicated to the happy few.

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INDEX OF AUTHORS MENTIONED

The index also includes the most important books; for other works, consult the name of the author. Flaubert's works, including all his youthful compositions, are in Capitals and Small Capitals.

Adam, Mme., 34.
Æschylus, 110.
Agonies, 48-49, 50, 68, 70, 133.
Ahasvérus, 17, 20, 24, 25, 48, 51, 52, 53, 56, 66, 70, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 128, 132, 240.
Amant avare (l'), 10.
Angoisses, 48, 70.
Antiquaire ignorant (l'), 11.
Antony, 15, 16, 36, 42, 44, 170.
Art et progrès, 15, 17.
Arts (les) et le commerce, 75.
Atellanæ, 110.
Aubigné (d'), 198.

Baladins (les), see Un parfum à sentir.
Balzac, 1, 23, 25, 39, 44, 53, 55, 61, 77, 80, 89, 144, 168, 184, 201; see *Physiologie du mariage*.
Barante, 15, 19, 50.
Baudelaire, 2, 94, 112, 129, 210.
Beaumarchais, 16.
Béranger, 166.
Berquin, 11.
Bible, 51, 188; see Solomon.
Bibliomanie, 22, 40.
Bibliophile Jacob (Paul Lacroix), 50, 55.
Boas, 63.
Boccaccio, 20.
Bouilhet, 14.
Bourget, 162.
Bouvard et Pécuchet, 23, 39, 40, 65, 66, 75, 93, 154, 179, 244-245.
Brantôme, 47, 189, 198.
Brillat-Savarin, 91, 95.
Bürger, 50, 51.
Burnouf, 115.
Byron, 14, 16, 17, 18, 41, 45, 50, 52, 53, 57, 58, 66, 78, 83, 85, 86, 90, 105, 109, 175, 187, 188, 190, 226; see *Childe Harold's pilgrimage*.

Cabell, James Branch, 85.
Candidat (le), 39, 146.
Candide, 166.
Cassagne, 76.
Cervantes, 10, 205; see *Don Quixote*.
Chambre (la) ardente, 12.
Château (le) des cœurs, 39, 82, 149.
Chateaubriand, 24, 124, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 180, 198, 201, 238; see *René*.
Chevrin ou le roi de Prusse, 19.
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, 16, 17, 20, 31, 58, 60, 105.
Chronique normande du dixième siècle, 19.
Cœur simple (un), 22, 23, 222, 244.
Coleman, 17, 26, 27, 34, 50, 56, 78, 85, 87, 108, 127, 132, 196.
Colibri (le), 22, 38, 70
Colomba, 112.
Comédie (la) de la mort, 20, 50.
Comines, 47.
Commis (le), see Une leçon d'histoire naturelle.
Corneille, 10, 108.
Cousin, 63, 91, 195.
Crimes (les) des reines, 145.

Dancourt, 189.
Danse (la) des morts, 50-53, 54, 133, 134.
Delavigne, 15, 47.
Demosthenes, 102.
Dernière heure (la), 24.
Descharmes, 9, 20, 23, 26, 27, 33, 41, 56, 69, 72, 85, 119, 144, 156, 161, 186, 230.
Deux mains sur une couronne, 19.
Diable boiteux (le), 18, 78, 80.
Don Juan de Marana, 21.
Don Juan (Une nuit de), 218.
Don Quixote, 7, 8, 10, 75, 87, 245.

Du Camp, *Souvenirs littéraires*, 27, 34, 47, 62, 74, 78, 81, 140, 151, 152, 155, 156, 159-161, 162, 163, 165, 171, 179, 209.
Dumas, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 44, 47, 170, 210; see *Antony*, (*la*) *Tour de Nesle* and *Don Juan de Marana*.
Dumesnil, Dr., 6, 162, 163, 210

Education sentimentale (second or final novel), 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 44, 47, 51, 64, 83, 95, 104, 106, 117, 123, 139, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 150, 151, 153, 154, 156-157, 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 183, 184, 189, 199, 206, 207, 208, 244, 245.
Education sentimentale, the first, 36, 43, 46, 106, 108, 117, 123, 129, 135, 144, 146, 153, 154, 165, 167-213, 216, 231.
Esquisse de la lutte du sacerdoce et de l'Empire, 42.

Faublas, 189.
Faust, 1, 14, 17, 18, 24, 26, 51, 65, 78, 79, 80, 84, 190, 196.
Femme (la) du monde, 20.
France, Anatole, 170.
Frédégonde, 16.
Funérailles (les) du docteur Mathurin, 93-97, 135.

Gaultier, J. de, 212.
Gautier, 2, 20, 22, 50, 54, 75, 109, 137, 190, 210, 242; see *Comédie de la mort* and *Mademoiselle de Maupin*.
Gendre (*le*) *de Monsieur Poirier*, 39.
Gœthe, 24, 70, 84, 145; see *Faust*.
Goncourt, 1, 2, 8, 22, 35, 61, 73, 74, 116, 128, 141, 146, 162.
Guizot, 78.

Hamlet, 48, 57.
Han d'Islande, 44.
Heine, 123.
Herbin, 15.
Hernani, 1, 9, 47.
Hérodias, 223.
Herodotus, 232.
Homer, 115, 166, 204, 220; see *Iliad*.
Horace, 91, 93, 95, 188, 217.
Hugo, 1, 14, 15, 16, 42, 44, 47, 75, 78, 87, 91, 109, 127, 153-154, 180, 210, 227; see *Notre-Dame de Paris*, *Han d'Islande* and *Hernani*.

Iliad, 102.
Imitation of Christ, 189.
Isabeau de Bavière, 14, 19.
Ivre et mort, 54-56, 96.

Janin, 55.
Juvenal, 92, 188.

Kock, (de), 40.

La Bruyère, 166.
Lamartine, 33, 42, 44, 80, 82, 166.
Le Poittevin, 41, 64, 69-71, 150, 151, 161, 202.
Leçon (une) d'histoire naturelle, genre commis, 38-40, 75.
Leconte de Lisle, 201, 211.
Leroux, 91.
Lesage, 18, 166.
Louis XI, 47.

Madame Bovary, 1, 3, 13, 16, 23, 32, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 58, 60, 64, 75, 79, 80, 106, 113, 115, 132, 133, 134, 137, 139, 140, 142, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 151 ,169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 177, 178, 180, 181, 184, 185, 189, 197, 212, 227, 233, 236, 240, 241, 242, 245.
Mademoiselle de Maupin, 16, 41, 75, 142, 144, 145, 174, 209.
Maigron, 44, 133.
Manon Lescaut, 189.
Marguerite de Bourgogne, 18.
Marguerite of Navarre, 189.
Marion Delorme, 12.
Marmontel, 10, 11.
Martino, 152.
Mateo Falcone, 18.
Maturin, 25, 93.

Maupassant, 68.
Maynial, 7, 22, 40, 69.
Mémoires d'un fou, 23, 26, 28, 29 ff., 34, 36, 37, 38, 45, 48, 53, 56-66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 76, 83, 89, 105, 117, 127, 129, 130, 133, 140, 141, 148, 189.
mère (une), 11.
Mérimée, 18; see *Colomba* and *Mateo Falcone*.
Michelet, 12, 18, 42.
Mignot, 10, 72.
Millevoye, 146.
Moine (le) des chartreux, 19.
Molière, 108, 174; see *Pourceaugnac*.
Monk (*The*), 17, 48.
Montaigne, 56, 66, 99, 104, 166, 198.
Montesquieu, 91, 198.
Mort (la) du duc de Guise, 19.
Murger, 152.
Musset, 2, 10, 22, 57, 113, 121.

Nonne sanglante (*la*), 17.
Nodier, 22, 78, 94, 170.
Notes de voyages, 43, 117, 140, 217 ff., 231, 240.
Notre-Dame de Paris, 15, 19, 20, 43, 47, 48, 78, 81, 109, 180.
Novembre, 83, 98, 117, 122, 126, 127-149, 151, 154, 170, 171, 173, 197.

Œuvres de Jeunesse, 17, 18 ff., 42, 218, *et passim*.
Othello, 16.

Par les champs et par les grèves, 102, 238.
Parfum (un) à sentir ou les baladins, 19-20, 24, 38.
Pascal, 65, 108.
Passion et vertu, 44-46, 53, 61, 142, 144.
Paul et Virginie, 145.
Peignot, 50.
Peste (la) à Florence, 20, 24.
Petronius, 110.
Physiologie de l'employé, 39.
Physiologie du mariage, 44, 77, 80, 89.
Pichot, 16, 18.
Piron, 189.
Plato, 93, 195.
Plautus, 109, 110, 113, 218.
Plutarch, 189.
Pourceaugnac, 11.
Pyrénées et Corse (journal of), 102.

Quidquid volueris, 42-44.
Quinet, 17, 18, 20, 25, 48, 51, 52, 78, 84, 128; see also *Ahasvérus*.
Quintus Curtius, 233.

Rabelais, 54, 56, 66, 67, 85, 86, 87, 90, 95, 102, 111, 166, 191, 198.
Rabelais, essay on, 86.
Rachel, notice on, 98, 101.
Radcliffe, Mrs., 26, 81.
Rage et impuissance, 22-23, 135, 244.
Régnier, 166.
René, 24, 26, 56, 57, 60, 66, 80, 83, 84, 105, 128, 130, 131, 175, 187.
Retz (de), 108.
rêve d'enfer, 25-26, 27, 28, 38, 243.
Robert Macaire, 226.
Robertson, 91.
Rome et les Césars, 92.
Romeo and Juliet, 57.
Ronsard, 157.
Rousseau, 56, 62, 138, 198, 227.

Sade (Marquis de), 91, 92, 102, 189.
Saint Augustine, 171.
Saint Julien l'Hospitalier, 81.
Sainte-Beuve, 166, 171.
Salammbô, 23, 75, 83, 93, 98, 116, 144, 146, 172, 191, 222, 223, 242-243.
Sand, George, 1, 50, 145, 233.
Schopenhauer, 52.
Scott, Walter, 11, 15, 16, 18, 22, 47, 237.
Scribe, 11.
Secret (un) de Philippe le prudent, 19.
Sexe (le) faible, 28, 89.
Shakespeare, 48, 57, 91, 166, 204, 207, 214, 225, 232, 233; see *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*.
Smarh, 75, 76-87, 88, 89, 92, 93, 96, 101, 105, 127, 129, 132, 133, 173, 188, 189, 205, 239, 245.
Solomon, 48, 188.

Souvenirs intimes, 4, 6, 8, 22, 29, 178, 222, 230.
Spinoza, 66, 70, 235.
Staël, Mme. de, 226.
Stendhal, 140, 233.
Sterne, 94.
Sue, 55.
Suetonius, 92.

Tacitus, 166, 188.
TENTATION (LA) DE SAINT ANTOINE, 10, 17, 18, 40, 51, 65, 79, 124, 191, 203, 223, 224, 238, 239, 242, 245.
Terence, 110, 218.
Thibaudet, 3, 9.
Tour (la) de Nesle, 16, 18, 47, 192
TROIS CONTES, 22, 244.

Vigny, 16, 100, 196.
Villiers de l'Isle Adam, 85.
Virgil, 93, 174.
Volney, 26, 60, 89, 133.
Voltaire, 5, 16, 166, 198, 227, 233; see *Candide*.
VOYAGE EN ENFER, 17, 24, 49, 78.

Wagner, 34.
Warens, Mme. de, 226.
Werther, 14, 56, 57, 130, 147, 175, 187

Xenophon, 114.

Zola, 149.

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